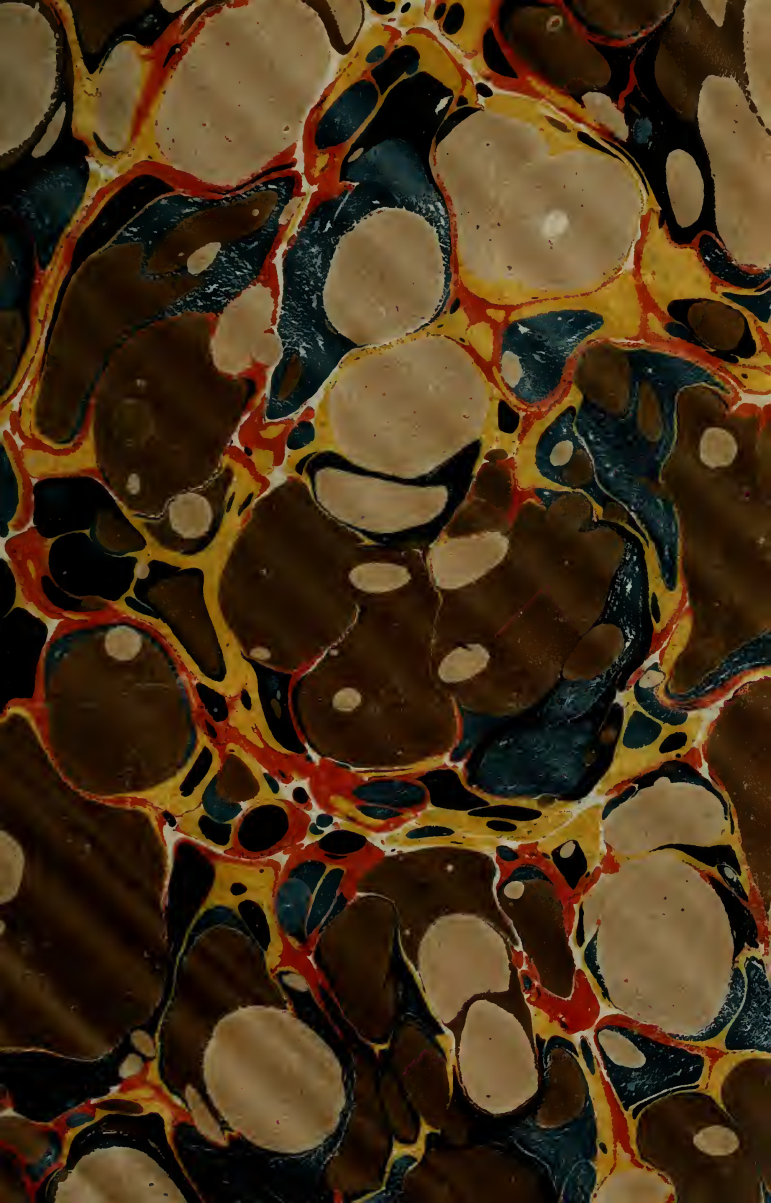






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WYNVILLE;
OR,
CLUBS AND COTERIES.

A NOVEL.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "THE AGE OF PITT AND FOX."

"There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well, so there are some that are good in canvasses and factions, that are otherwise weak men."
—LORD BACON.

IN THREE VOLS.

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WYNVILLE;
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CHAPTER I.

MOWBRAY'S COURT.

THE Park at Kingsleigh was several miles round, and stretched up a hill, in the southern direction. There were glades in various parts, which formed delightful places for reading and reflection, or taking

a quiet canter with some of the ladies of the house at Kingsleigh. From the summit of the hill, towards the south, an immense prospect was opened, and I was fond of going to where the greatest extent of scenery could be beheld. The eye looked over a vast champaign country, dotted with villages and country seats, the spires and towers of several churches being visible, and the mansion of more than one nobleman being seen. Far to the west ran a long line of hills—some fourteen miles distant—covered with forest trees. This was the park of Mowbray's Court, the dwelling of the beautiful person whose form had dazzled me, and whose character had interested me so strongly.

Sir Charles Maclaurin knew the Earl of Mowbray intimately, and proposed to me to drive, one day, with him to

Mowbray's Court—saying, with a sly look, "I will introduce you to the beauty you have been dreaming so much of." I eagerly consented, and one morning, after breakfast, we drove over together, from Kingsleigh House, to see the seat of the famous family of the Mowbrays, whose name was known through Europe.

Mowbray's Court was situated in a lonesome part of the country, and had little neighbourhood about it. The park was only some four hundred acres, and was broken and uneven, shelving down into a valley, in which was seated the old "Court," as it was called. It was one of those large straggling, rambling houses of which England has so many—had been built at all periods—had no pretensions to architectural grandeur, yet was pleasingly antique in appearance, and possessed so many moral

charms, from the fact of its being the birth and family seat of the Mowbrays, that I seldom was more stirred by the sight of any building than when Maclaurin and I found ourselves at the end of the park, and caught a first view of those walls in which had been reared some of the proudest spirits that our isle of manhood had given birth to. There had been born the doughty Hugh Mowbray, one of the bold barons of Runnymede renown — and the first Earl Mowbray, who had shone at the Court of Elizabeth—Sir Francis Mowbray, the poet and cavalier—his younger brother, Vernon Mowbray, who followed Hampden. Within these old walls were born the quaint old philosopher, the metaphysician, and deep thinker, Guy Mowbray.

And there also lived that ambitious and scheming Earl of Mowbray, who

died for one of the plots in Charles the Second's reign, when the first title was attained. And here sojourned the restorer of the fortunes of the house—the first Earl of Mowbray, the friend of King William, the correspondent of Locke and Newton, the colleague of Somers and Godolphin, the direct ancestor of more than one of those Mowbrays who made their name popular and famous in the Senate, the Court, and in war, whether struggling with the Foxes and the Pitts, or marching to conquer with Wellington, or sailing upon the seas with Nelson.

The sylvan quiet of the park contrasted with the mood of mind in which both Maclaurin and I found ourselves as we rode down the narrow avenue that wound through the demesne. Both he and I reverted to the memory of those Mowbrays

who flourished in the seventeenth century; as their names were consecrated with the martyrdom of the scaffold—their lives being devoted to the people of slavery-hating England.

“Under these old trees—certainly in yonder avenue—did Dryden often walk, when he was on a visit here. There are several traditionary stories about the poet, preserved in this family, which I am surprised Sir Walter never collected. Sidney and Hampden often sojourned here; so did Lord William Russell, and there is preserved in the castle a letter of Ben Jonson, in which he refers to the pleasure he felt at the representation of a masque during Christmas time here. These old family seats in England are historical testimonies to the grandeur of the English nobility—their moral grandeur. What mind so callous or coarse

but needs must feel some glow of enthusiasm in treading this beautiful park, the home of the noble and the good—the spot where famous poets and philosophers mused and aspired—where statesmen have ceased from their schemes, and heroes have taken rest after their toils? Where has France such social monuments to show, and when can such mansions exist in America ?”

CHAPTER II.

LORD MOWBRAY—A SMALL GREAT
MAN.

WE were at the door of the Court as Maclaurin ceased to speak, and were ushered into the library, where we found the Earl of Mowbray poring over some MS. genealogies. He was a tall and handsome man, then past the meridian of life, but still

showed that he must have been very handsome in his younger days. His face was furrowed with care, and report said that the fortunes of the noble peer were embarrassed, in this case not untruly; for though the family estate was large, yet he owed much money, and supported his title with dignity. Lord Mowbray was in his own peculiar way a successful man of the world. He had filled high posts, but owing to the defects of his early education, which had been strangely neglected, his intellect had not expanded to that breadth of view required by first-rate statesmanship, and he had gone through life, and won his influence, by a certain hardihood of character, combined with a suppleness which censorious people called want of principle. He had certainly a keen eye to number one, and contrived that no child or cousin,

or kinsman or kinswoman, should be without feeling the benefit of Lord Mowbray's great influence. He was a most zealous advocate of the interests of those who had claims on him, and practical patriotism meant in his view to procure places for all of his friends who wanted them. He had a keen relish for the secret corruption of a genial kind which a skilful minister can employ. He liked to buy a man; and when he found his opponents vendible, he would negotiate a sale on their behalf with Downing-street in a style matchless for its adroit discretion. He had no boroughs; he had not a son in Parliament; he was not a good debater in the House of Lords; and how did he manage to monopolise so much influence? Simply by having spent all his life in studying the art of getting places. His knowledge of

the characters of public life was prodigious. When in the House of Commons, at a time while his elder brother was alive, Lord Mowbray (then the Honourable Hugh Mowbray) had filled the office of whipper-in, and the habits of the office adhered to him through life. He took a whipper-in's view of society, found out who everybody was, where they lived, how they lived, and what they were driving at, and could calculate off-hand to a nicety what Sir Thomas or Squire Robert would do at a given juncture of affairs. His conversation was an old chronicle of the scandal of two generations. If he had committed his recollections to paper, he would have horrified half May Fair with the *faux pas* of its forefathers. In consequence of this peculiar kind of knowledge, his conversation was chilling to a person who wished to think well of the

political world. But of the very great men—a Pitt, a Fox, a Burke, a Canning—he spoke with sincere respect. “They were all fine fellows, Sir.” But of kings, peers, and “patriots,” what stories he would tell, always clenching them with some incontrovertible proofs of their truth, and startling the hearer by suddenly revealing to him the real cause why such a man accepted that office, and why the cried-up political leader really committed suicide. Then he knew all the illegitimate gentilities of English society; who their fathers were, and what their mothers were. One would have supposed he had been a spy upon every amour in the remotest parish of the island. He had great powers of observation, a memory of singular retentiveness, and was a master in the art of pumping for information. It was almost indispensable

for every ministry to keep on good terms with such a man as Lord Mowbray. If he wished to annoy a Secretary of State, he had only to open one of his fingers, and allow a little of his fistful of scandal to escape, and make its subject quake with the terror of more revelations. And when he had done thus annoying him, he would perchance take his seat in the House of Peers, right opposite to his wincing victim, and with grave air, every feature calm except his fine dark eyes twinkling with the delicious titillation of torturing a personal and political foe, he would gloat over the flurried manner and nervous distrustfulness of the bilious and miserable cabinet minister, wincing as he found himself in the presence of one who, by a few words, could prove to all mankind how much of knavery could be committed by one of the so-called "enlightened and great spirits of the age."

“Mr. Wynville,” said Lord Mowbray, “I feel much pleasure in making your acquaintance ; you are, I hear, going to practise at the bar. I was myself in Lincoln’s Inn for a couple of years. I knew Grey there very well just before he went down to fight Northumberland on Whig principles. If I had not another station to fill, I should like to be a barrister. No profession lets one behind the scenes more. There is a monotony about the medical profession. A doctor sees human nature really expose itself only when the patient is *in extremis*; but a lawyer sees the contortions of robust manhood ; the cupidity, the cunning, the foolish fondness, the fiendish hatred of mankind, he learns almost every circuit he goes. And then the number of cases that he sees which are settled without being brought into court—gad ! that must be so curious. He must often know as much

about people as if he were their confessor. Now, for example, there is poor Granby Cumberland, why you know he is utterly ruined, and his affairs have been under the eye of Sugden, the advising counsel to a party with heavy claims on poor Cumberland. Now you know Sugden must have known all about Cumberland being a ruined man, at the very time that Cumberland was ranting in Parliament about his personal independence, and at the very time he got some of his radical tag-rag friends at Westminster to ignore the revelations which had been taken down cut and dry by Tindal and Sugden. How Sugden must have chuckled within as Cumberland blazed away about lawyers looking for place and pay. Poor, poor devil! Cumberland is sadly in want of both now."

I expressed my surprise at hearing that

Cumberland was in difficulties ; averring my belief that the reports about his affairs had been exaggerated, when Lord Mowbray resumed—

“ I have known this long time that he was quite done up. His father, to my certain knowledge, never had the money which people supposed that he had realised. Cumberland himself ran through the actual thirty thousand pounds which his father gave him, besides two large legacies which had been given him by relations. Then Mrs. Delmain spent ten thousand pounds for him in as many months. He was content with the honour of having her for his mistress ; and Bessy Harrison, the dancer, stood him three thousand pounds at least ; and then his election expenses could not have been under fifteen thousand pounds. I actually saw the draft of an account at Bilton’s, the soli-

tor, which ran up to six thousand three hundred and ninety-one pounds ten and tenpence, which was merely for legal expenditure. But he would have gone on for a couple of years longer only that the bank of Striggett's at Bath failed, and took away the last ready money he had. Now he is a beggar—an utter beggar—and, what is more to the purpose, he is likely to remain one, for he has no retrieving power. He is just one of those men who are voted extremely clever by the world as long as they go smoothly, but are voted useless and incompetent in their downfall. Unfit for any profession—at the wrong side in politics—he can look for no official post, unless he be made a candle-snuffer or door-holder at the House of Commons. By the way, he would make a capital door-keeper for the House of Commons; the post is a good one, and Mr. Layton is not likely to live long.”

“Mr. Layton appears a very hale and hearty man,” said Sir Charles Maclaurin, “and how is it possible your lordship could ever suppose that a man like Cumberland could condescend to be door-keeper to the House of Commons, into which he often went himself to harangue upon state affairs?”

“My dear Sir Charles, you do not know what a callous creature a systematic sensualist becomes. Take away all his other pleasures from a sensualist, so long as you leave him the power of eating and drinking well, the gratification even of his animal appetite will leave a large amount of pleasure for him. Cumberland, I venture to prophesy, in time (if he does not commit suicide), will become a coarse, vulgar glutton, getting into ecstasy over roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, and in a state of exuberant delight over a fiery bottle of London-made port wine.”

“But, surely,” said I, “his friends, by exerting themselves, could procure him some valuable colonial appointment.”

“His *friends*! a dandy demagogue’s *friends*! It is my belief, Mr. Wynville, that all the friends of Granby Cumberland could not procure him the post of bellows-blower to the organ of Cripplegate Church—a post which I hear is vacant, and which I intend to get for the third son of a scampish curate from Yorkshire, whose father was recently disgowned for some pranks. I hear that Cumberland’s friends are thinking of getting him a place under the new police; and I should not wonder if I were able to get him some appointment of a subordinate kind in it, with a salary of a hundred a-year, or thereabouts.”

The news of Cumberland’s failure was disagreeable to me for various reasons. I

had placed my name on some bills of his, and he owed me at least six hundred pounds besides. I spoke about Cumberland's family being highly respected, and that he was heir to a baronetcy.

“ Pooh ! what a chance he has of ever becoming a baronet ! The Cumberland baronetcy is one of King Charles the Second's creation, and Granby Cumberland is one of the many minor branches of the family. The present baronet is a very hearty schoolboy. I saw him last week at Eton, where he was eating tarts and cheesecakes with the appetite of a coal-whipper. Then, besides, Robert Cumberland, of Roxley Hall, in Oxfordshire, and Colonel Cumberland, of the —th, now distinguishing himself in India, are between the present baronet and Granby Cumberland ; so that it can scarcely be supposed that he has even a remote

chance of ever coming to the title or property."

Just then a peal of laughter from an adjoining apartment was heard—a glorious, hearty, musical laugh, like Mrs. Nisbett's; and Lord Mowbray said—

"Ah ! there's Lady Jane. I hear her lively chirrup. Come, Maclaurin, we will storm her *sanctum*, and surprise Mr. Wynville. Let me have the pleasure of making my daughter, Lady Jane, known to you. Since her poor mother's death, she is the being that I am proudest of in this world."

CHAPTER III.

BEAUTY AND GENIUS.

WE entered into a large, old-fashioned chamber, looking to the north, and beheld a sight on which I feasted my eyes with delight.

Standing before a chair placed upon a small platform, was an extremely venerable man, in the full costume of an English field marshal, glittering with orders. The

old veteran appeared to be about seventy years of age, though I learned afterwards that Field Marshal Mowbray was not less than ninety years of age. He was standing with a drawn sword, as if he had been waving it in the attitude of one leading a regiment to the charge. His aged and worn face gleamed intensely with life, and vivid recollections of the well-remembered scenes of his stirring youth, and age, for the moment, seemed to cease from pressure upon his attenuated limbs.

Standing opposite to an easel, with a painting brush in her hands, in a charmingly negligent undress, attired with a picturesque carelessness, stood the lovely person whose form and face had so delighted me when I had met her in my solitary ride across the heath. There she stood, the beautiful and dazzling Lady Jane Mowbray,

with a voluptuously beautiful figure; a face not merely handsome in its resplendent charms, but exquisitely lovely, from the joyous, cordial, heart-cheering expression that gave warmth and animation to its grand and noble features. Her eyes, so large and superb, were brilliant beyond aught I had ever seen in woman's head, and the whole face, form, and manner, for the moment, acted on me with an enchanting influence. She saw that I was smitten with her appearance, and a blush (however slight) was plainly perceived by me as she met my gaze.

Looking over the portrait on which the lovely artist was engaged, stood a personage of grand dignity of bearing, with all the marks of a Mowbray in his countenance. It was the uncle of Lady Jane, the Bishop of Southampton, whose form and features

would have become the character of a mitred priest in those days when the Church lorded it imperiously over the State. I never saw in any face, a more intense expression of personal pride. Without any coarseness or arrogance, there was a *fiercé* and majestic severity of expression stamped on the prelate's face, that one could not help thinking was somewhat inconsistent with the meekness of the Christian. He looked too proud to be mean or base, as if he scorned to stoop to sin. His well-opened eyes and his straightforward look seemed to court scrutiny, as if he had nought to fear from the strictures of malice. Beside the easel were two daughters of the lofty prelate, whose faces attested their parentage, and whose youthful beauty and less severe bearing contrasted with their father's grandeur of carriage; their tender figures brought out

into relief the womanly charms of Lady Jane, whose dazzling figure, buoyant with animation, and radiant with pleasure, was now made more prominent in the group as the eye rested on the shrivelled and waning form of the aged veteran, in whose wrinkled visage the eye alone spoke of the fiery valour which more than once had shot electric valour through the heart of a staggering column, and retrieved the fortunes of a bloody day by the sight of daring deeds of valour. The old field marshal, his imperious nephew the bishop, the Lady Jane, with her youth and bewitching beauty, and the fair girls, who seemed abashed at my entrance, all made up a picture which flashed with brilliant effect upon the mind, and added interest to the curiosity with which I regarded her whose form and face had affected me more than ever the sight of woman did before.

Lady Jane threw down her brush, at our entrance, and came forward with a playful smile on her brow, and after greeting Maclaurin, said in a spirit of raillery—

“ Well, Sir Charles, have you come here to get shriven at this old Tory house, and have you resolved to give up the error of your Whig ways, and lead a proper Tory life for the rest of your days, and atone for all the Whiggery you have committed in the House of Commons and in the *Edinburgh Review*? ”

“ Ah ! my fine lady, before that time comes, I will have you wearing a gown of blue and buff colours, and I will have your talents for the fine arts devoted to painting a gallery full of Whig celebrities, from the days of Walpole to those of Lord John Rowland.”

“ No ! indeed,” answered Lady Jane ; “ that

day will never come. You Whigs are an un-English race; you are French-bred in your principles; you love French philosophy, French politics, though, excuse me for telling it, you have no taste for French manners."

"'Pon my word! this is a pretty reception for an old gentleman to receive from the fair daughter of the venerable house of Mowbray. Well, Lady Jane—to turn from politics, we are fated never to agree in them; let us rather see your progress in the fine arts. Ah! by Jove—'tis a speaking likeness. Field Marshal, you live again upon the canvass, the pencil of Lady Jane will hand you down for generations."

"Do you really think it like?" said Lady Jane, and she looked from the picture with a gaze of affection and reverence towards the subject of the portrait, the venerable hero, the uncle of her father.

It was an admirable picture, the colour was perhaps a little too metallic; but the bold and masculine outline of the figure, the fine taste which marked the design and execution of the portrait, a certain bold contempt for the petty tricks of the art of portraiture, stamped the picture with the force of genius.

“Lady Jane will show you something better than that, Sir Charles,” said Lord Mowbray. “Come this way, my dear,” said the proud father, as he opened a door leading into another chamber, and ushered us into a room which we found the studio of sculpture. “Here Lady Jane works as a statuary—who is that?” said Lord Mowbray, as he pointed to a full-length figure, which had just been set up on a pedestal.

It was impossible to mistake the sculptured

form of the Bishop of Southampton. There stood in marble the form of the lofty prelate—as coldly proud—as severely noble—as the original. There were certain defects in the statue, the drapery wanted flowing grace; but as in the picture of the field marshal, there was impressed upon the work a force and daring vigour, which genius only could supply.

“Lady Jane,” said Sir Charles Maclaurin, “your progress has astonished me. I thought it would be years before you could execute such a statue.” And Maclaurin launched out into an eloquent praise of the artist’s performance.

I admired Lady Jane before I was astonished at her work, and I looked with confusion from the works to the artist. She seemed pleased with the evident effect she had produced on me, but appeared quite

careless of compliment to her talents. She was the very first of the company to change the conversation, and direct our attention away from herself and her works.

“But how,” she asked, “is the good Duchess of Fleetwood? It is an age since I have seen her. I hope she is as well as she deserves to be. She is the best Whig in England, if she be not the cleverest one;” and Lady Jane looked archly at Sir Charles Maclaurin, and smiled at him as she pronounced with a slight emphasis the word “cleverest.”

“The duchess is quite well,” said Sir Charles, “and bid me hope that you will fulfil your promise of going over to Kingsleigh. See I am the bearer of a message from her,” and Sir Charles handed one of those irregularly shaped billets, which female fingers alone are fantastical enough to fold

“Why, if I were to go over to Kingsleigh,” said Lady Jane, “I should be devoured by such a house full of Whigs. You know that politics—and politics alone—keep us apart from each other so much. But I forgot that you have not had luncheon. Come to the dining-room, and we will talk while you and Mr. Wynville refresh yourselves after your ride.”

CHAPTER IV.

LUNCHEON—OLD CUSTOMS—TALK.

WE adjourned to the dining-room, a long, narrow room, with first-rate portraits of the most eminent members of the Mowbrays. Its windows were of stained glass; and its low ceiling told of its antiquity, as the room was built in times before the rules and proportions of architecture were strictly

observed. The furniture was old, almost too old, and was rather worn; the carpet was faded; but everything was carefully preserved, and negligence could not be seen in anything. The table was laid in a plentiful style. There was abundance of good old English cheer—a sirloin of beef at one end of the board, and a spiced head at the other end; a huge venison pasty, and a Wiltshire ham, were at either side; while various dishes of cheesecakes and jellies were arranged on many old silver dishes, whose grotesque carvings and antique appearance reminded us that the plate of the Mowbrays was almost as old as their pedigree. A couple of serving maids, quaintly and picturesquely dressed in blue and silver, attended at the table. I suspected that Lady Jane had designed their garniture, as it certainly had a striking

effect. I afterwards learned that, except on public occasions, the Mowbrays were always attended at their meals by serving maids; that in accordance with an old family custom which they never would break through, that no serving men were employed to wait upon the family at table. This was only one of several curious traits of manners preserved from former times by the Mowbrays.

Lady Jane sat at the head of the table, and played the part of hostess with something of the cheerful hearty style of the English gentlewoman. There was a frankness and simplicity of manner about Lady Jane that one rarely sees in women of fashionable life. Her air of rusticity gave relief to her accomplishments. She spoke with perfect knowledge of what was going on in London, and discussed the last new

novel and the last play with Maclaurin. She anxiously inquired of Maclaurin what was doing about the statue in memory of Canning, and spoke with enthusiasm of that statesman's eloquence and genius.

“Lord Harry was here yesterday for a couple of hours. He paid us a flying visit. He seemed to know nothing about what the Canning Statue Committee are doing, and, in truth, he did not seem to care; for he exclaimed, ‘Canning’s fame wants no statue; *the man* will live in history, and his speeches be read while there is a House of Commons in England. Statues are only fit for mediocrities; they are only fit for those who wish to eke out a place before posterity by the aid of an artist.’ Lord Harry, with talents for anything, affects to despise the intellectual, and now devotes himself to sport as much as if he were a humdrum squire in Somersetshire.”

“He is a strange creature,” said Maclaurin, “yet I heard Canning speak of his talents with great warmth. He is uncommonly quick, has great capacity for the details of business, and has a strong masculine understanding; but his oratorical capacity is limited, and he cannot take the place in public life which he covets. He is one of those who make a maxim of ‘Aut Cæsar, aut nullus;’ yet Lord Harry is the sort of man we want in English statesmen.”

“You are quite right, Maclaurin,” said Lord Mowbray. “Of late we have been running too much upon set speakers, specious orators like the Grants, graceful elocutionists like Lord Mulgrave’s son; the men with capacity for affairs are wanted. By the way, have you heard Percy speak since?”

“I have, and famously he speaks. He will

be the best parliamentary speaker of the next generation. He is clear, ready, and animated. There is no tinsel eloquence, no filagree rhetoric in his bold masculine style, which has all the nervous simplicity of genuine English eloquence. There is no false glare, none of the gaudy verbosity, which our trim sentence-makers confound with eloquence. He is by many degrees the best young speaker I ever heard. Since Pitt's time, the House has never had a debater so youthful and vigorous."

"Yet," said Lady Jane, "I read the reports of his speeches in the *Times*, and they did not seem to me so very eloquent."

"Ah! but if you had heard him, and if you had seen the readiness with which he replied to the various speakers who had preceded him, and the ease with which he unfolded his own ideas of the case, and the

practical view which he took of the question, discussing it in a straightforward style, you would have perceived his great merits."

"I can tell you, Maclaurin," said Lord Mowbray, "don't calculate too much on his being a Whig. I met him at a hunting breakfast the other morning, and from the tone of his manners, and his views of political life in England, I think there is the material of a good Tory in him."

"I should hardly suppose," said Lady Jane, "that one with the birth, the fortune, and the talents of Mr. Percy; heir to one of the oldest earldoms, and with his proud name emblazoned in the brightest pages of England's history, would stoop to an alliance with the low-class politicians that are now striving to render the Whig party the means of uprooting the institutions under

which old England grew great and prosperous. A pretty pass things will come to when the cotton lords of Manchester shall dictate what measures they please, and Government be handed over to a body of traders and their clerks."

"But, Lady Jane," said Maclaurin, "you forget that traders, as you call them, have often held a very important place in English Government. The Craven family were London merchants, the Robinsons rose by commerce, so did Lord Carrington's family."

"And so," cried Lady Jane, "because Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson, were made peers after their lives of servitude under the Pitts and Grenvilles, we are to be governed by a dynasty of clerks and small merchants!"

"Well, Lady Jane, I did not think that you were so un-English as to wish to pre-

vent the rise of untitled talent and of genius without a pedigree," cried the Bishop of Southampton, who had written a pamphlet much lauded by the Whigs.

"Nay, my dear Bishop, I never meant any such thing as you choose to suppose. I will cry, like Mirabeau, *La carrière ouverte aux talens* ; but what I complain of is that the money power alone is attended to in politics. We hear of nothing but the rich, the rich, the rich. The Bank is becoming a great seat of power, like Windsor Castle ; the cabinet is swayed by the factory lords of Manchester, and I do not see that this new money power will be at all more generous to plebeian talent than the aristocracy, although it rants so much against the nobility."

"Generosity to letters is not the strong point of our English nobility," said the Bishop of Southampton.

"I once," said I, "heard a Republican declaimer say that Nature made Burns a poet, and aristocracy made him a gauger."

"Ah, Mr. Wynville," said Lady Jane, "I know who said that. It was Mr. Foss, the Socinian sneerer at everything that is venerable in our social system—the declaimer against the Church of England, and scoffer at its rites and ceremonies—the gentleman who so skilfully saps the faith in Christianity of his young and inexperienced hearers. My cousin, Gabriel Cleveland, is one of his proselytes, and puffs the fame of the missionary of intellectual infidelity, and I heard him repeat the bitter saying about aristocracy making Burns a gauger. And pray, what did democracy do for Burns? Did it subscribe thousands for his family, or did it do aught besides eagerly reading his glorious ballads,

and paying a halfpenny a-piece for the paper they were printed on? Did democracy stand by its order when it allowed Burns to pine? Why, whatever the short-comings of our nobility may be in their alleged neglect of genius, I should be glad to know what democracy ever did for its heralds or apostles? But our English democrats are spurious pretenders to true republican feeling, and they mean the populace when they talk of the people."

"Still, Lady Jane," said Lord Mowbray, "I am afraid our aristocracy have not been fond of patronising art and artists, and men of letters sufficiently."

"Great artists are too proud to be patronised," answered Lady Jane; "and talk of the pride of our Norman peers, the *hauteur* of some of our men of letters is of as marked a character; and I am glad to see

men with moral pride enough to preserve their independence. Why should not genius be just as proud as high birth or vast wealth? Ask the literary men of England whether they would prefer the rule of the old aristocracy, or that of the Manchester money people, and I'll engage that you'll find them all voting against the purse-proud *parvenus*. When I lived in London, with Aunt Wyndham, I saw a good deal of the literary characters of the day, and certainly they were not misled by a sworn antipathy to the aristocracy of their native land."

We stood talking so long, and were so charmed with Lady Jane, that Maclaurin and I did not observe the rapid flight of the hours, and it was very late in the afternoon when we left Mowbray's Court.

CHAPTER V.

REFLECTIONS—A NEW GUEST AT KINGSLEIGH—

MR. PERCY THE ORATOR.

ON riding home with Maclaurin, we conversed about Lady Jane. I expressed my interest about her, and desired to know more of her.

“She is a very extraordinary person,” said he; “and though in my varied life I have seen many singular characters, cer-

tainly Lady Jane Mowbray is one of the most remarkable I ever met. She is, as you perceive, a young woman of talents as extraordinary as her beauty. From her youth she exhibited a rare talent in drawing and painting; and Lawrence told me that he rarely saw in any one the artistic talents so strongly developed. She is a bold, and, in some respects, daring thinker; but her prejudices and convictions are all on the side of authority; and I assure you that I never chanced to meet with so inveterate and philosophical a Tory. In fact, Lady Jane has a regular system of her own in thinking upon English society, and urges her opinions with no small tact and eloquence. She has always been partial to the society of intellectual men, and was particularly noticed by Mr. Canning. In fact, I suspect that the early and frequently re-

ported praise of that brilliant person, developed the mind of Lady Jane, and gave her an intellectual ambition. Her mother's death left her the mistress of her father's household, and his fortune not being very large, it required some management to keep up his hereditary status. Without knowing it herself, I think that Lady Jane has been influenced a good deal in her opinions by the fact of the family at Mowbray's Court being swamped in political influence in ——shire, by the overwhelming power of the noble Duke at Kingsleigh House. Then you are not perhaps aware that the Duke of Fleetwood manages his political interest by keeping up an alliance with the leading mercantile persons in the larger towns in ——shire. He stoops a little to notice them, and they are very servile to him."

"Has Lady Jane been reported to have suitors for her hand?"

“A score of them at least; but, as you might suppose, the lady is very difficult to please. There is one person who has twice proposed for her, and whom she would throw into ecstasy if she accepted his hand.”

“Is it Lord John Rowland?” said I, recollecting the way in which Lord John had defended Lady Jane from the severe remarks of the Marchioness of Trafford.

“’Tis he; but Lord John has no chance of her. What is most curious is, that his eldest brother, the Marquis of Trafford, would have liked to propose for her, but feared lest she should refuse him also; and the heir of Kingsleigh House would not have it said that the fair lady of Mowbray’s Court did not condescend to accept him. The Duke and Duchess of Fleetwood would be glad enough to see Lady Jane their daughter-in-law, but the Marchioness of Trafford and Lady Clara would throw every obstacle

in their way. If Lady Jane comes over during our stay here, we shall perhaps see some curious play."

"Lady Jane's character, I take it, is that of a profound *esprit fort*."

"Not exactly; for that kind of woman generally despises or affects to despise religion, and Lady Jane is one of the most devout Christians we could meet—though the native character of her mind is vigorous and hardy, and quite free from all cant. I know myself, from conversation with her, that she has read, and, what is more to the purpose, that she knows a great deal of the sermons of Barrow and South. She is familiar with the poets of England and Italy, and I have reason to think is now reading Virgil—though she never makes the least pretence to knowing a word of the dead languages. Her favourite

idea in religion is the responsibility of man for his actions, and I can assure you that she lives up to her creed, for every hour of her time is devoted to some strong purpose."

"She seemed to me as if the household were not beneath her notice—"

"As it most certainly is not; for Lady Jane, I suspect, knows too well that she would marry a gentleman of handsome figure and winning manners, even though he were not rich—if he caught her fancy—and I suspect that she is prepared, even, were it necessary, to battle it through life. She piques herself upon knowing the world, and thus she overlooks the housekeeper, and would not be at all ashamed to turn from a treatise on the picturesque to examine the buttery book, or lay down her chisel for a bunch of keys. She has a great deal in

her of the Englishwoman of the seventeenth century."

"Half-way between Lady Jane Grey and Sophia Western," said I.

"Just so," said Maclaurin; "Sir Philip Sidney, if he had known her, or Tom Jones (were there such a person) might equally be enamoured of Lady Jane."

Thus talking, we arrived at the park-gate of Kingsleigh House. It was not without some emotion that—in turning a corner of the road, when we caught for the last time a view of the distant park of Mowbray's Court—I looked in that direction, and let my mind pleasingly dwell on the image of the beautiful object that had so far enchanted me. I thought with myself what might she be doing now; and I believe that I even dared to consider whether my appearance or manner had found the least favour in her eyes.

We arrived late at Kingsleigh House, and the first course had been removed as Maclaurin and I entered the dining-room. I got a seat at the lower end of the table, but Maclaurin was seated up near the duke, and I heard him saluted cordially in a rough manly voice, that came from a young man of some eight-and-twenty years of age. There were strangers at table, for the duke went the round of the county for his guests; and always had some two or three of the county gentry at his table.

The young gentleman who saluted Maclaurin was descanting on manners in America, and saying that the people of that country were much enlightened, and that he had seen as good society in that country as in any part of Europe; but he found the legitimate influence of good so-

ciety was not so operative in America as it ought to be. In a pithy, unpretending style, he took occasion to observe that the tendency in American institutions was to make a tyrant majority, and to abase every high moral or lofty personal influence before the crushing weight of a gross majority. "They may do so with safety in the States, where they have a vast outlet for the swarming emigrants and labourers ; but to Americanize England would be to disgrace our country, to make the mob of our great towns dominant over the established respectability of the land, and to make the Irish bogtrotters yelling at the heels of an O'Connell, if not morally, at least numerically equivalent to the bold and manly yeomanry of England. I trust in God that day never will come," said the speaker.

Where had I heard that voice? Where had I seen that speaker?

There could be no mistake about the young gentleman. It was Mr. Percy, whom I had heard more than once with pleasure at the House of Commons, and whose talents had been the theme of discussion at the luncheon at Mowbray's Court. The quiet easy carelessness, dashed with a certain pride and a *de haut en bas* manner, distinguished him at the table as in the senate. There was no mistaking that he was the very type, in character and manner, of the genuine English aristocrat—the man, not only of birth, and title, and fortune, but of proud historic name. Cried up as he was even then, I naturally regarded him with much interest.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER-DINNER TALK.

AFTER the ladies had retired, the conversation turned upon Mowbray's Court and its inmates. The fine old field marshal was talked of, and various opinions were offered about the public character of the Earl of Mowbray, with some hints about the alleged embarrassment of his fortunes.

“ Lady Jane is certainly the finest Tory in England. The Whigs have no such beauty to show. And her talents are quite extraordinary ; I vow, too, she is very estimable, and greatly to be liked.”

“ She is,” said the old Duke of Fleetwood, “ the boast of her family ; and has as good a heart as ever beat in a woman’s breast. Ask the poor about her ? Ask the people in the employment of her father, and they will vie with each other in praise of her.”

“ I hear,” said Mr. Percy, “ that old Lingard has actually proposed for her.”

“ Oh ! fudge,” cried Lord John Rowland.

“ Ridiculous in the extreme !” said Sir Charles Maclaurin.

“ Mere gossip,” said the Duke of Fleetwood.

“ Very absurd,” echoed the Marquis.

“Preposterous,” exclaimed I.

“Not at all preposterous,” said Mr. Percy, fixing his keen eye on me, and catching at my word; “old Lord Lingard is equally amorous and ambitious; he is a man of natural vanity and acquired sensualism. In common with any one, he could not fail to be struck with the beauty of Lady Jane; and his ambition aspires to carry off her hand. Besides his political ambition being mixed up with his eagerness to induce her to accept his hand, it is his wish that his house in Grosvenor Square should become the most popular at the West End. If Lady Jane sink into Lady Lingard, he would be sure of having his drawing-rooms filled with the flower of society; and Lingard, who is a thorough *parvenu*, would be in the seventh heaven with the Cowpers and Jerseys, and all that circle frequenting his house, as they

would certainly do, if Lady Jane were its mistress.”

“Lady Jane Mowbray marry old Lord Lingard!” said I, with undissembled astonishment.

Mr. Percy laughed with the air of a keen man of the world—“There have been more ridiculous marriages, and before the honeymoon was over, the world ceased to wonder about them.”

“What possibly could induce her?”

“Oh! fifty things might, wealth, and a splendid house, and the sway over the mind of a man closely connected with the cabinet, and possessing much political weight. Besides —”

But several just then rose and adjourned, and Mr. Percy following their example, we found ourselves together in a corner of the drawing-room.

Mr. Percy, I have intimated, was proud, if not haughty, of the first rank, and heir to an earldom of great historical renown. In attacking one of his speeches in the *Gridiron*, old Cobbett said, "What wonder for this young sprig of nobility to be an aristocrat to the backbone, *a fellow that has got the blood of princes in his veins!*" A Wynville, of Wynville Manor, was not known to be looked down upon by Mr. Percy, who in point of fact was undoubtedly prouder of his superlative talents than of his illustrious descent, or of the princely property to which he was the heir.

And superlative ability he certainly had, and of the most remarkable kind. He had a certain masculine vehemence of nature, joined to an instantaneous perception. He was quick and rapidly comprehensive beyond any man I ever met,

though in the working of his intellect there was so much of physical impulse, that one could not be always confident of the soundness of the conclusion arrived at by a mind that glowed with ardour in the exercise of its athletic power. He was a man who revelled in self-reliance, and was reckless of the small and useful arts of judgment by which ordinary men guide their minds. His character influenced his intellect. There was a wild stock of pride in his nature that was poetical, not in its manifestation (for he was no rhymster), but in its lofty ambition, and its superiority to commonplace life. Whatever motive would influence such a man, you would be sure, as you looked on him, that no vulgar motive could rule the proud and lofty spirit tabernacled in that masculine and wiry frame, gleaming from the deep-set eyes that

twinkled under a bold brow, over-arched by a massive and grand skull, which contained a brain, often surpassed in subtility, but not easily excelled in force, in power, in logical keenness. With imagination he would have been one of the master spirits of the world. But he had the power of appreciating the ideal, and a play of Shakspeare ever made him forget the stormy life in which he had embarked his energies.

The beautiful Marchioness of Trafford, with her haughty tone, exclaimed with surprise—

“Is it possible, Mr. Percy, that such an absurd report could be circulated as that Lord Lingard actually proposed to Lady Jane Mowbray?”

“It certainly has been talked of in London. It came from Lord Lingard’s own set. I heard it first—but, perhaps, the least said the better—only I can assure

you that the affair has been certainly spoken of. Mr. Wynville seems to think that the report is quite ridiculous."

"It would, indeed, be a profanation of beauty," said I, "to unite so lovely a woman as Lady Jane with an old and ugly man like Lord Lingard."

"Well," said Mr. Percy, "there certainly is something strange in the idea of such a match; but we English are more tolerant of *mésalliance* than other nations. Is there one house in all the peerage that cannot point to several intermarriages with inferior people? The wealth and influence of Lord Lingard would, according to the common rule of the world, justify the marriage."

"I should not be surprised," said the Duchess of Fleetwood, "if Lady Jane came here in a few days; we shall know all the truth then."

On returning to my room that night, I

felt strangely moved at the intelligence of the marriage talked of between Lord Lingard and Lady Jane. She exerted over me an influence I never felt before. I had often seen calm and sweetly beautiful faces, and figures grand and commanding, which had struck my attention, and even captivated my fancy; but Lady Jane struck my heart. Her imposing air, and perfectly original style—her blending intellectual accomplishments of a rare kind with an enthusiastic freshness of manner, which gave piquancy to her style—her lofty figure, and expressive face, full of meaning and expression—had at once softened and subdued me, and left me a captive in her chains. I lay awake for a couple of hours, thinking of her, and asking myself whether there was the least chance of my captivating her; and it was with highly pleasurable

feelings that I recollected her looking at me more than once with some attention during my brief visit at Mowbray's Court. Pleasant dreams haunted me that night, and when morning streamed through the curtains, my waking thoughts were of Lady Jane Mowbray.

CHAPTER VII.

LADY JANE'S ARRIVAL — TALK OF A TORY
BEAUTY.

Two or three days afterwards, we were told at breakfast, by the Duke of Fleetwood, that Lady Jane Mowbray had consented to come over to Kingsleigh for a week's visit, and the intelligence was received by those at the breakfast-table in a variety of ways.

The old Duke of Fleetwood was apparently in high spirits at the news; Lord John Rowland looked pleased, but anxious; a shade of displeasure was visible on his sister's (Lady Clara's) face, and the Marchioness of Trafford was stately, and almost sternly impassive. The duchess was not in the oak parlour at breakfast. Old Maclaurin's intellectual face brightened up at the notion of a colloquy with the lovely Tory; and Mr. Percy openly avowed his hearty satisfaction at the prospect of meeting Lady Jane; as for myself, I was delighted beyond measure.

There was a great mixture of company constantly going and coming at Kingsleigh House. I had made myself acceptable to the family, who were pleased to pay me particular notice; and the old duke constantly pressed me to stay longer. Lord

John Rowland was then publishing a series of essays, and I was, under his able guidance, concocting a series of anti-ministerial pamphlets; and Lord John had stated, in the most positive way, that I should be one of the most active members of the Whig party, and he was particularly anxious that I should become intimate with Mr. Percy.

But though openly I affected to be engrossed by politics, I scarcely thought of anything for the ten days previous to the arrival of Lady Jane Mowbray. I expected her coming with anxiety.

It was the morning of the day when she was expected, and on descending to the breakfast-room, I found those of the company at table discussing the probable time of her arrival. While thus occupied, the voice of the old duke was heard coming in from his morning rambles; and his hearty,

joyous laugh was more than usually loud. Throwing open the door, he entered, exclaiming, "Here we have her at Kingsleigh House, whence we will not easily let her go;" and leaning on his arm, attired in a riding-habit, was Lady Jane Mowbray, her curls rather disarranged by the morning's breeze, but her complexion brightened by the drive from Mowbray's Court. Lord Harry came in after.

Lady Jane had driven over Lord Harry in her chariot, as he was anxious to be in time for a county party in the neighbourhood of Kingsleigh. His tall figure contrasted with the lovely softness of his beautiful companion.

"I shall get a fine character, Duchess," cried Lady Jane, "driving about of a morning with sporting gentlemen; but you know Lord Harry and I are cousins; and I

could not resist the opportunity of trying my new pair of pony cobs, under so experienced a judge as Lord Harry; so I agreed last night to drive him over to breakfast, and here we are."

All the party, not even excepting the Marchioness of Trafford, or Lady Clara, were glad to see her. She laughed and chatted at her ease with those around her; and her appearance was to me even more bewitching than before. Her conversation was fresh and racy, instinct with unaffected gaiety. Nor was it the worse because of the slightly countrified air with which she discussed some things, and the locality of spirit which she exhibited in talking of the affairs of the neighbourhood.

"It is time for you," said the Duchess of Fleetwood, "to redeem your promise, and come to Kingsleigh at last. You are, indeed, a sad visitor."

“Why, you must recollect I must play the part of factotum at Mowbray’s Court, else the household would get into disorder. Our housekeeper is old, and cannot be superseded, as my father would not hear of it; and the young people have to be looked after, and my father is busy with his London affairs; so that if I were to absent myself long from Mowbray’s Court everything would get into confusion. When I marry, I shall have time enough to go about and see more of life.”

“It would be only justice to the world that you should do so, Lady Jane,” said Lord John Rowland; “to keep yourself from society is a species of crime against society.”

“That compliment loses none of its value, coming from a public man; for you and your order like to live in public, speak, write, and think for the public. Your

politics invade our private dwellings, and we shall soon have no retired life at all in England."

"In scenes of excitement," said Mac-laurin, "politics are the bane of private life, but the English nation loves retirement too much, and has too much Saxon phlegm in it to yield up to the public that sacred spot—that home which every Englishman cherishes so much."

"Yet, look at our cousins across the Atlantic," said Mr. Percy, "they torment you with their inquisitiveness; they live in public, and insist that you shall do the same. There is no reserve in the Americans, they are familiar in everything, and wish not only to bring every one to one common plan, but they desire even more—they wish to run their general rolling stone over all mental distinctions, and vulgarise their

highest and best natures, by insisting on one common standard of familiar manners."

"The Americans are certainly a very prominent people," said the Marchioness of Trafford; "they have no eloquence—no refinement,—no tact. How they do pester one with questions, reminding you that everything is better in the States!"

"Let us remember," said Mr. Percy, "that they have great energy; they stride across America with spanking quickness; they clear vast forests, where white men never lived before; they dyke morasses large enough to sink armies; and bridge rivers that roll past their vast waters for upwards of a thousand miles. The Yankees are the pioneers of the white men of Europe—the advanced guard of the human race; the men who are to reclaim North, and give

a new civilization to South America, and who, in days to come, will found a great popular empire, whose mandates will command obedience from Washington to Cape Horn, who will make a great common law—the law of the States of America—obeyed by all those who dwell beyond the Alleghanies and the Andes.”

“And does the American intellect,” said Lady Jane, “scan the future with such an eagle glance? Is it possible that the people with so much vulgarity in their manner have so much sublimity in their thoughts, and that, as they cannot rejoice in contemplating a past history, they exult in foreseeing the future glories of their race and their country? Have they indeed so much prescience, such lofty aspiration, such soul-stirring imaginings of national genius, as already to colour and design the vast im-

perial picture, which you have boldly sketched as the future?"

"No," said Mr. Percy, "it is very possible that as yet the Americans do not foresee all the wants of their empire. But presently they will extend their territory. Their crowded cities will demand an outlet for the energy that is pent up within them. The wealthy classes will demand to have political power of a more stable kind than they at present enjoy, and the ambition of power, the lust for celebrity, will develop master spirits, who will awake military heroism. They will try and produce the counterparts of a Nelson—a Wellington—and Napoleon. The passion for glory will inspire the Americans in another age, when they emerge out of a commercial shopkeeping existence."

"But," cried Lady Jane, "the Americans are the most democratic people in the

world; they have no ancestral sentiment; surely they live in the present, and to make money is their sole excitement in life. What noble sentiments have they in their ordinary life to justify you in giving such a glowing portrait of their soaring social tendencies?"

"A great people—of a proud and energetic race—with the language of Shakespeare and Milton, and kindred with the stock of Milton and Newton, will never submit to a coarse, low, mean, and mercenary existence, such as plebeian democracy assigns to mankind. They will by nature be driven to seek a higher and loftier existence, and the gifted amongst them will covet nobler prizes, than the trumpery offices to be won by electioneering arts."

"And yet, Mr. Percy, it seems to me

that all the English Whigs wish to Americanize our institutions, and to give our society the tone of manners which you condemn so much in America."

"There is a great difference, Lady Jane, between popular and plebeian institutions. I trust that England will always have a popular system of government, but I sincerely hope that a plebeian constitution, one in which mere numbers will prevail, to the swamping of birth and property, will never be tolerated in this free country."

"I am delighted to hear you say so; but certainly some of your allies talk very dangerous language, and some of the Whigs are getting into the same mode of talking, if not of thinking."

The conversation turned to more trivial topics than those of the day. The freshness and animation which distinguished Lady

Jane was conspicuous in light as in grave questions. The whole table admired her easy yet gracefully spirited manner, her joyous, cheery voice ringing with clear silvery tones; her arch looks as she quizzed the old gentlemen who mingled raillery with their compliments. Maclaurin's face glowed with admiration, and Lord John Rowland seemed another being as he sat gazing on her.

For myself I can but describe my sensations by saying that I was passionately in love with her. Her voice titillated my ears with delicious influence; her face made my pulse beat quick, as I looked at her splendid eyes; her charming English complexion; her ripe and tempting lips, which, cherry-red, pouted as her white teeth flashed from behind them. She was not one of your fine *girls*—she was not a girl, but

a woman—that finest and greatest specimen of female nature—a real, genuine, aristocratic lady of England—with a proud heart, and lofty spirit, and cultivated mind; with manners to enthral and talents to dazzle—with a grandeur of form, a rich glow of beauty, that filled the mind with bright and brilliant images; and better still, with a soul that won sympathy from all who were fortunate enough to enjoy the charm of her intercourse.

Was it any wonder that I should have fallen in love with so beautiful, so splendid, so captivating a beauty? I felt at once enthusiastic and timid. For while in mind and soul I drank in the delight which flowed from contemplating so gifted a woman, I remembered that she was my superior in rank; and that she had refused many offers of marriage from suitors, who had eagerly

coveted the honour of calling her their own. Thus I felt sad as I gazed upon her, and recollected that there was little chance of my ever wooing her as my bride.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST LOVE—A PHILOSOPHICAL GALLOP.

THAT Lady Jane Mowbray saw the sensation she created in my breast was evident to me, by a certain manner she adopted towards me. She appeared rather pleased with my conversation, and listened to me with a courteous air as I addressed her; but she seemed never desirous to encourage

me farther. Yet her manner was certainly very gracious to me, as I contrasted it with the lofty neglect which she exhibited towards poor Lord John, and the mocking levity with which she joked her cousin, Lord Harry, about the passion which she felt for him. It was well known, it appeared, that she was very difficult to be pleased in a husband, and she was often rallied on the point by the Duke of Fleetwood.

Upon the occasion of a hunting party, Lady Jane and I were thrown into company with each other one day. The Kingsleigh ladies rode in carriages to see the hunt, except Lady Clara, whose mare having got restive was sent home, while her fair owner was accommodated with a seat in the Kingsleigh barouche. Lord Harry rode off eagerly after the hounds, and Lady Jane and I found ourselves together, nearly alone. It

was just at the highest point of the noble park of Kingsleigh; right and left green glades opened down between the thick beech woods. The view to the other side was over a vast champaign country, through which the River Wale flowed in sinuous course, and numberless villages here dotted the wide surface of the land. In the extreme distance the large town of Lye was visible, with its smoke and towering cathedral spire; and at the other extremity of the wide view, was the high land of Mowbray's Court, the home of heroes and of statesmen; and what was more touching to my feelings, the home of Lady Jane.

"What a magnificent scene!" I exclaimed, as I pointed out the various features of the grand landscape to Lady Jane.

"Yes. There are few scenes in England more noble; and how truly national the

landscape is! In what other country could so much wealth, beauty, and happiness be found united in society? Does not the whole landscape illustrate Old England?"

"Yes, it is certainly very beautiful; even at this season how many objects of attraction are in that vast scene!"

"Ah! Mr. Wynville, what a pity to think that this country must be revolutionised, and that our community cannot be allowed to enjoy the blessings won by the glorious toils of our ancestors. What a pity that this fair England must ere long be delivered over to the rapacious herd of vulgar democrats, who are incapable of feeling the noble pride of national glory, and who live in a dull and vulgar belief that they, and they alone, possess all the wisdom of this earth! When their day of rule shall come, will England wear that smiling face, which we

now admire in her villages and vales? No, the homesteads will be lonely, and the village swains will be converted into pallid skeletons, tottering to their spinning jennies. Their music shall be—not the pipe or the hautboy—but the dismal clang of the factory bell. For religion, the peasantry shall have neither the homely tradition of their fathers, nor the calmly beautiful religion of the Church of England—but the gospel of greedy gain. Poor Richard's Almanac shall take, amongst our people, the place of the Ten Commandments; and the nobles, the prelates, the senators, with far-descended fame, and the warriors who have won their laurels in their country's service, shall be cast aside, and voted useless. And the country Factory Lords will be installed in power; and, abolishing the Church, and crushing the nobility, tear up the foun-

dations from beneath this proud old monarchy of a thousand years of fame."

"God forbid this dark and dreary day should ever come! No! Lady Jane, we English are too proud a race to be ruled by the lords of the loom, and the arrogant autocrats of the counting-house, ten times—a hundred times more insolent than the ennobled descendants of those who fought at Cressy and Poitiers, or who brought Lord Strafford to the block, and resisted King Charles in the field; and who, in the day of gloom and apprehension, shook the House of Stuart from the throne, and placed the Great Deliverer there."

"And you speak thus!" said Lady Jane; "you—a Wynville, of Wynville Manor—will you follow your party in their cry for revolution?"

"As a free Englishman, as a hater of

tyranny in every form, as the son of an English commoner, and as a Whig by connection as well as descent, I would struggle to the last against the ascendancy in the national councils of a mere sordid trading interest, incapable of large views, and knowing no other morality than that of the ledger."

"Oh ! I rejoice to hear you say so. What, shall England be governed by a mere money party ! Let men worship honour, glory, truth, lofty station, splendid talent, the voice of eloquence or the rays of genius ; but to grovel down before base, odious, glittering gold ! Oh ! for a noble-hearted people like the English, a people with an ancestry of ten centuries, the proudest of all monarchies, with the blood in their veins of the boldest and most generous race ; the people who carried the Reformation, and secured the right of free thought despite

the opposition of principalities and powers ; the people who strode a century ahead of Europe, and secured civil and religious liberty, realising the aspirations of Milton, and carrying out the suggestions of Locke ; the people who have founded the empire which is to Christianize the East, and whose sons, according to Mr. Percy, are to civilize the western hemisphere—that people—so proud and high-spirited—to be tamed down to the rule of the cotton lords! Oh! what a miserable end for English history! and yet, Mr. Wynville, your party are bringing about such a change. You are bringing about a revolution to be effected by a junction between the *parvenu* classes with the plebeian. You are going to deliver over England to the domination of the vulgar rich, and the violent rabble. The traders of the great

towns will use your Whig aristocrats as tools for accomplishing the revolution which is to destroy this ancient realm. Yes; the Whigs, like the Girondists of France, are the apostles of principles by which probably they will be the first victims themselves!"

I was quite astounded with the vehemence and energy with which Lady Jane spoke. There was an earnestness in her eloquence, and a charm in the silvery tones of her musical and resonant voice, which acted like a strain of gushing music in a German opera—wild—airy—and agitating.

The vivacity of her style, and the freshness of nature exhibited by her, removed her quite out of the class of the political women of fashion whom I had encountered in London society. I was especially surprised at the commanding tone of thought displayed by her, and while she illustrated her views

of society in England by rapid allusions to general history, which it was plain she had studied regularly. What interested me much in her style of declamation, was her tact in illustrating her ideas by references to chance remarks on previous topics, which she had heard from the lips of Mr. Canning—of Earl Dudley—of Lord Harrowby; and she once quoted, with malicious triumph, a shrewd and biting saying of Lord Melbourne—the Whiggish William Lamb—in which the reform party were pleasantly mocked at.

We conversed with each other with much animation on both sides. Bred up a Whig, and myself the admirer of Lord Grey's politics—although I did not like the noble earl's cold *hauteur*—I took occasion to express my dissent from her views of public matters, and suggested that she was

misled in her views of the trading classes, and that they had at heart too much honest English prejudice to crush the aristocracy, even supposing that events should give them the power of doing so. In the true Whig fashion of the time, I urged the expediency of concession for the sake of preserving the whole social fabric, and argued my side of the case in imitation of the manner in which, upon the very same topic, I had once had the good fortune to hear Lord Melbourne defend himself when rallied on his liberalism by a Tory lady of equal fashion, but not of equal eloquence, with Lady Jane Mowbray. I pooh-pooh-ed the rich traders, and sneered at them as the apes of aristocratic life; satirised their manners, and jocosely laughed at the idea of men, with tens of thousands in the three-and-a-half *per cents.*, leading out the rabble

for the overthrow of the altar or the throne.

Lady Jane listened to my views with interest, but was not influenced by what I said.

“Oh! Mr. Wynville,” she cried, “it is just like your party. See how you make game of the reformers behind their backs! You laugh at ‘the people’ whom you so often invoke in your speeches in Parliament. Now when you go into the House of Commons, you will affect virtuous indignation and ardent sympathy with the very classes whom you have just now been so pleasantly satirising. Well, the people are certainly very sheepish to take the Whigs as their shepherds! But here comes the barouche, and the beautiful marchioness, whose face is enough to reconcile one to Whiggery even of so deep a dye as your own, Mr. Wynville.”

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE AND AMBITION.

My stay at Kingsleigh was protracted in consequence of the Duke of Fleetwood having announced his intention of bringing me into Parliament for one of the boroughs in his possession ; for these were the times in which promising young men were inducted into Parliament with much greater care than

at present prevails. As a Whig, and as one whose family was linked for generations with the Whig magnates, I was not much surprised at being brought into Parliament, especially as my friend Maclaurin had suggested to all the heads of the party I should be employed in active parliamentary services. It was whispered for some time, and at last got public, that I was to be returned for one of the Duke of Fleetwood's boroughs.

“A seat in Parliament,” cried Lady Jane to me one day, “a seat in Parliament! With what delightful visions it must fill a young man's mind! What projects of patriotism—what schemes of ambition—what day dreams of historical renown! How his heart must beat with the hope that he will, like a Sheridan or Canning, charm the listening senate; or like Mr. Pitt in the days

of the Coalition of infamous memory, read his history in the eyes of all the nation ! A beauty going to her first ball cannot have half the delicious anticipation that floats before the mind of a young orator, when he finds the stage opened to him, that greatest of all stages—the British House of Commons, which by the press has all the civilized globe for its audience ; and which has posterity to appeal to for the fame and glory of its actors !”

“Eloquence, now-a-days,” observed Sir Charles Maclaurin, “has become prosaic and circumstantial. The flowing declamations of Bolingbroke, the fiery bursts of Chatham, the profound philosophising of Burke, the fanciful rhetoric of Sheridan, and the exquisite oratory of Canning—all these are now not sought for. The soul-stirring language of Grattan—that boast of

the Irish nation—is now out of place in our discussions. Mr. Plunket was heard in the House of Commons as much by his transparent clearness of reasoning, his strong common sense, and practised skill in debates, as by the admirable classical simplicity and strength of his speeches. Brougham's readiness in pelting his opponents with facts of all kinds, right or wrong, secures him the ear of the House more than those elaborate and concatenated sentences of lumbering length, which he supposes to be Demosthenean. In the same way, Peel's memory, and business-like talent for details, even of the most disgusting kind, are as serviceable to him as his full command of all the mechanical points of oratory."

"And is it possible that life in the House of Commons is becoming so dull a thing, that mere plodders—mere tape-tying clerks,

upon a large scale, parroting out tables of statistics, ejaculating reams of figures, and screeching out balance-sheets into the ears of stunned Chancellors of the Exchequer—is that to be the existence of the House of Commons, wherein such master-spirits have rejoiced to live?”

“Lady Jane,” said Mr. Percy, who attentively regarded the beautiful politician, “every age has its peculiar features and its still more peculiar bores. In this age, the finances have gone somewhat wrong. The country has been plundered of some hundreds of thousands of pounds, and nothing but a dull, tedious, plodding bore like Joe Hume, is capable of testing and tracking out the wrong doings. We Whigs will use Joseph—get him to do our dirty work, make him cover the Tories with unpopularity—Joseph all the while thinks he is a

mighty man—a calculator, who in statistics and figure questions is capable of being very useful to us just now. But let Joseph get out of this line ; let him try to play a master-part in the drama, and he will soon find that he has been made a mere tool of. At present he is unquestionably very useful to the Whig party, and so we tolerate him up to a certain point.”

Lady Jane appeared rather shocked at the coolness with which Mr. Percy spoke of using a man as a tool, and expressed herself incredulous of the fact that the Whigs would be able to manage the ultra-radicals so easily as they supposed. She then turned to me, and asked how soon should I be returned to the House of Commons? I answered that I should first wait until one of the duke's boroughs was vacant, and

that just at present there was no immediate chance of a seat.

I observed, with a great deal of inward joy, that Lady Jane appeared rather interested about me. At that time I was—may I say it?—at least as good-looking and pleasing a young man as was likely to be found in general society. I inherited from my family a sufficient share of the hereditary appearance, which was distinguished by its marked style. Tall and active, my form was not deficient in manly grace, and my countenance was considered to be very like that of Lord Castlereagh, which was a compliment to my face, if not to my character. I had a silvery voice that I inherited from my mother, and I expressed myself with facility; I was also reserved in my manners, and I think the very fact that I required to be—as the phrase goes—“drawn out,” con-

tributed to my engaging the attention of Lady Jane.

A letter announcing the illness of the old field marshal, and her father's anxiety about him, took away Lady Jane from Kingsleigh sooner than was expected, and I was not long in returning to town, after the beauty had returned to Mowbray's Court. I remember that in the evening before she left Kingsleigh, she managed to tell me that she hoped to have the pleasure of meeting me again, and there was a grace in the manner of her uttering that simple speech, which fixed it on my memory with peculiar force.

CHAPTER X.

THE SHERIDAN CLUB.

ON the first day after my return to town, I went to dine at the Sheridan Club. This was a society composed of about two hundred persons, and was in itself a club, in its nature and composition very different from the other clubs. It was an excellent club for young men about town, having a certain pretension to be a society of commoners, and yet being more easy in its manners, and

with less pretensions to exclusiveness than was usual at that time amongst the better clubs. There were several peers and members of the House of Commons in the club. Actors and authors; painters, barristers, and doctors; a couple of stray divines, and three or four of the higher class of journalists (adepts in thunder-making), were amongst its members; mixed up with some country humourists, a few sporting characters, some officers of the Guards, and some habitual play-goers. These all formed a very miscellaneous, and, in some respects, most agreeable society. The tone of the club was careless and easy. The well-bred rakes who frequented it gave a lounging, loitering, gossiping character to the club, where one never heard politics, and the only news desired by the members was the last new joke, or the name of the last new

dancer out at Paris, or singer at La Scala. There was a smoking-room where the funniest, if not the wittiest, conversation in London was held nightly after the theatres. There was a long, straggling dining-room, where members entertained country friends to excellent champagne, and the Sheridan was noted for its wines. Up-stairs was a delicious snuggerly, where we dined ourselves, there being seldom more than fifteen or sixteen members dining at a time in the club: there was a recess off the room for newspapers and books, where some of the prozers would doze over the journals. The walls of the club were hung with portraits of the statesmen and politicians, and literary notorieties of the days of Sheridan. Fox and Pitt faced each other upon opposite walls, and Lord Thurlow at one end of the room scowled upon Mrs. Siddons, as

Lady Macbeth, at the other end. There were pictures and relics of Sheridan in every corner. There were portraits of him at all periods of life, and some theatrical illustrations of his comedies were amongst the best pictures in the collection. The Carlton House set, with General Fitzpatrick and all that *clique*, were also to be seen. The club had originated in the union of some of the friends and contemporaries of Sheridan, who, about the time of his death, used to have festive meetings for the sake of "days of auld lang syne," and gradually they became a regular club.

Scandal, literature, and the drama were the topics most in vogue at the club. I had just glanced at a newspaper for form sake, and directed the waiter to bring me the *carte* to order my dinner. In the middle of the room sat four or five scamps about

town—ages varying from forty-five to twenty-five—engaged in the innocent occupation of punch-drinking, a large bowl of that beverage being before them, which they were bent on imbibing. I perceived that they were men who used to associate together a great deal.

As I supped my soup at a table close to them—I was the last diner in the room—my ear was caught by the sound of Cumberland's name.

“Poor Cumberland—and so he is smashed completely—well, poor devil, I never thought it would go so far, Major Bass,” said one of Cumberland's intimate friends. “What can be done for him? I understand that he has not a shilling.”

“What a confounded ass he was to have lived at such a rate,” said one of his most frequent guests. The speaker was a shabby

dog, that never paid anybody, a blackleg, an M.P. for a rotten borough, a sponging sycophant upon great men, and a gambler who always tried to pluck pigeons.

“Yes,” lisped a drawling young sprig of plebeian insolence, a creature whose grandfather sold tallow candles; “it was decidedly very absurd for a man like Cumberland to have had two such women as Bessy Harrison and Mrs. Delmain; either would have been expensive enough, but the two together at a man’s purse;—I protest no fortune could stand such assault.”

“What can a man like Cumberland do?” said another speaker. “He’s too old for a profession, he’s at the wrong side in politics, and no Government could possibly employ a man who has dabbled so deeply in low Radical politics. He’d be a capital figure for a highwayman, and would make a very

good Claude Duval *redivivus*, but the age of highwaymen and chivalry is gone."

"Would his party subscribe for him?"

"Pooh!" said the blackleg M.P., "Cumberland's loss is a gain to the Whigs and moderate liberals, and as for the Radicals they have not sentiment enough to remember a man for his losses in their cause. Ah! the Tories are certainly the best friends after all for an adventurer! They have more gratitude. Egad! I think the best thing Cumberland could do would be to turn theatrical manager. He knows a lot of actors and actresses, is a shrewd, knowing fellow in many things, and if he were put forward as a screen before some capitalist, it might be possible to turn him to some account. Some friend ought to propose it to him."

And this was the way that several of

Cumberland's friends spoke of his downfall.

“It never rains but it pours. His Duckenfield adventure was not enough for the poor devil, but in the very same year the bank must break, and beggar him. Well! it will be somebody else's turn next. 'Tis the way of the world. But who's for Astley's? I go to-night to see this new woman there, whose figure is so much admired. Shall we make a party?” And the company broke up, and rattled off in a couple of hackney carriages, roaring with laughter and in a flood of high spirits.

I was left nearly solitary in the dining-room. And I leisurely sipped after dinner my bottle of Beaune, and munched my biscuit with unusual gravity; slicing my American apples with as solemn an air as Maclaurin would when analysing a new system of German metaphysics. I fell into

a train of meditation—half-pensive—as I looked at the blazing fire, and sipping my wine, thought of the manner in which Cumberland's downfall was discussed by his good-natured friends.

“And this,” thought I to myself, “is the world! These are the hearty good fellows, so friendly over the bottle, and so merry over a man's wine! What kind of company have I been keeping in associating with some of these very persons who now seem so odious to me!” I looked around the room, and saw the numerous pictures of celebrated persons, adorning the walls. Many of them had lived and died in struggle and toil. Some had left deathless names, and others were famous social notorieties, brilliant and gifted sensualists, men to shine at a feast, or contribute to the gaiety of a court. What was life worth? Was it a

gift to be flung away? I know not how the contrast between the rollicking, worthless lives of the punch-drinking scamps, who had just gone to Astley's, and the famous lives of some of the great men whose portraits looked down upon me, flashed into me a sort of determination to endeavour to distinguish myself in an honourable manner. I had heard Lady Jane Mowbray express her sense of how glorious a consciousness must that man possess who had talents to sway an assembly of his fellow-men, and who united many claims by descent and alliance to the esteem of Englishmen. I was Mr. Wynville, my family had been honourably distinguished, and should I lead an obscure life? Should I, like Cumberland, pass the morning of life in idle, worthless trifles, in the pleasures of fleeting enjoyment, neither making a high character to gain the

respect of my contemporaries in displaying those mature talents consecrated to some great purpose, which can alone give a man a title to posthumous fame?

Yes; I resolved to rouse myself to some sturdy, practical exertion. I had hitherto lingered on the brink of public life. My party would expect me to exert myself to serve them. Sir Charles Maclaurin had praised my understanding, and Lord Grey had even been pleased to express himself gratified that a member of the Wynville family was likely to be distinguished in public life. I resolved to set about training for the ordeal which I was soon to undergo in Parliament; and I resolved that I would struggle hard to gain a name amongst my party for readiness and extent of information.

Floating through my mind was a vague kind of feeling, that if I became eminent in

public life, I might hope to gain the respect of Lady Jane Mowbray, if I could raise in her bosom any more tender feeling towards me. Yes; the desire to please her was there. Yes; I recollected the proud look of admiration which had lightened over her magnificent features one night at Kingsleigh House, when Mr. Percy electrified the circle with one of his racy bursts of idiomatic eloquence, when speaking on a theme which swayed his mind. What would I not give to see her look so ardently at me? I remember that when I went from the club to my chambers in the Temple, on that night, that I sat down and chalked out a course of systematic study in parliamentary affairs, and closely scrutinised the position which I was likely to occupy when I should be brought into the House of Commons.

CHAPTER XI.

VICE AND VIRTUE—STRUGGLES OF SPIRIT—
A TRIUMPH.

I WAS anxious to help Granby Cumberland, and render him every assistance in my power. I knew some good traits in his character that interested me in his fortunes, and his reckless disposition did not alienate my regards for him. Besides, much of his bad fortune resulted from accident.

Cumberland resided, in the days of his wealth, in a certain very elegant and expensively furnished snugery near Brompton, though he always had furnished apartments besides in St. James's Street, where he transacted political business with his constituents. At neither place could I gain any tidings of him, and I was puzzled where to go to seek for him, when I received a letter from him, dated Paris, and written in miserable spirits. It gave a melancholy account of his prospects and fortunes.

I sent him a hundred pounds, and advised him to come over to England, and see whether it would not be possible to do something for himself, urging him that Paris was the worst place for a ruined Englishman to stay in. I succeeded in persuading him to return; and, dreading

to meet the world's eye at first after his downfall, he went to Croydon to sojourn.

While I was at a late breakfast one morning—for I am sorry to say that I had got into the detestable habit of sitting up late at night, reading and writing what could be better studied by day—a knock came to my door, and my clerk ushered in Lord Mowbray. The veteran place-hunter expressed his pleasure at finding me by myself, for he said that he had some private matters to talk to me about.

I could not guess what the subject of his conversation would be, and I could scarcely hope that he was going to consult me as a barrister, as I had only been six months called to the bar, and had not yet gone a single circuit. He began, however, in a cautious way, to approach the matter.

“Mr. Wynville,” said he, “you will, I

trust, excuse the liberty I take in calling upon you; but as you are to be a House of Commons man before long, you may as well break in your hand by managing a delicate piece of business, which is of a confidential kind. We are at opposite sides in politics; but that need not in the least hinder our being confidential with each other."

I surmised that he was going to make me some artful offers to enter into the Tory service, and felt complimented that I was supposed to be worth gaining over. But I was mistaken as to his objects.

"The fact is," said he, "that I have reason to know that a seat in Parliament is just now a capital object to the Government. It is so circumstanced that its immediate friends cannot vacate their seats, and they are anxious, if possible, to carry an election

in a town which has the name of being free and independent, in order to make a show of having public opinion to some extent with them. Now there is a friend of yours, Mr. Wynville, who might be of great assistance to the Government."

I was quite at a loss to understand the drift of the old intriguer's beginning, and he started at seeing my slowness in conceiving what he had called on me for.

"Why," continued he, "of course I do not wish to appear as a go-between in such a matter, but really I am anxious to help Government in this affair, and Silverton would be an excellent seat for ministers to get just now. Now what I want to speak to you about is the desirability of getting your friend Granby Cumberland to resign and recommend us—I mean Government—and if he does so, and gives us certain

facilities for approaching the electors, of whom he has great experience, Mr. Cumberland shall have a commissionership of Irish Excise, with twelve hundred a-year, and banishment to Dublin will be more tolerable than vegetating at Boulogne. Propose the plan to him—quickness is a capital object in such a matter; we want the seat without delay, and next session it would not be so much worth having as this. I speak to you in confidence, as one gentleman to another, and the reason I speak to you is, because you are, I am sure, a sincere friend to poor Cumberland. But mind; mention no names. The first thing you have to ascertain is, whether Cumberland will resign to accommodate us.”

“That is,” said I, “whether he will sell you the seat.”

“Hem! You use an awkward word. No;

not sell the seat. Only enter into an arrangement! Ascertain that, and if content to resign, and give us a good word under the rose, so as to facilitate an approach to the electors, he shall be provided for for life."

"I can't see why your party ought to be anxious to get the seat of Cumberland, and pay so much for a place that may be contested by the Whigs."

"Pooh! I need not tell you why we are anxious about it. But excuse me; I am in haste. Try and sound Cumberland on the point, and perhaps you would be good enough to let me hear from you as soon as possible. The less of writing we have on such an—an—an—an arrangement, the better."

So saying, and with many injunctions of secrecy, and some winkings of his bright

eye, Lord Mowbray took his leave, evidently in a state of great delight at his having some intriguing to manage. I could not help thinking what a difference there was between the cunning Isaac of a father, and the modest and imaginative nature of his gifted daughter, the artist and *bel esprit*.

I repaired without delay to Croydon, and found poor Cumberland in a state of great dejection. He was in small lodgings in a neat cottage off the High Street. I found him reading the *Sporting Magazine*, and he certainly looked very sad and broken down. His beard was neglected; his eyes blood-shot; and he had the look of a ruined scamp in his whole appearance. I tried to rouse him, and made him come to dine with me at the Greyhound.

I got him into something like spirits as we sat down to dinner, but the sight of the

champagne gave him a feeling the reverse of pleasure.

“Drinking did me more damage, and led me into more follies, than I care now to remember,” cried he.

“Pooh! Cumberland. A glass of champagne will do you no harm.”

But he was down to Zero. Though he drank some wine, it neither stimulated nor cheered him. He ate with more voracity than I ever saw him before.

“What the devil am I to do?” said he, when the room was to ourselves, after the servants had cleared away the dinner, and left us to our claret. “I am an absolute beggar. I have no profession by which I can make money. If I continue in the service, I am a man pointed at. Good God! what would I give to have known the value of money!”

“Nay!” cried I to Cumberland, “you have the world before you still, you are a young man, you are unbroken in body, have nerve, audacity, and versatility; you can do much yet to retrieve yourself.”

“How! how! how!” cried he with vehement eagerness, becoming of a sudden very excited, as he drank off a glass of claret, and filled his glass quickly again.

“Well, I have something to communicate now, which may be of importance to you—and to your future life. Things may not be so bad after all. But first you must promise me not to tell any person what I am going to talk to you about?”

“Of course not,” cried he. The idea of something agreeable being about to be told had the effect of cheering him up, and again he drained out his glass, and began to look as if he were getting like himself again. I

could not but feel much sympathy for him as I saw him in a position so desperate, ruined in circumstances, and married to a woman of tainted character! Cumberland's great fault in my eyes was that he was a mere humbugger in politics, and that he used to sham popular sentiments, without caring for the people, about whom he constantly declaimed. It was, however, the levity of his political conduct which I supposed would now gain him a temporary escape from his trials, and enable him to quarter himself upon the public purse.

His fine black eyes were keenly fixed on me, as I commenced to divulge to him the scheme which I thought he would eagerly catch at. I did not tell him the name of the person who had spoken to me, but gave him the substance of what had been said to me, enlarging upon its feasibility, and

dwelling upon the desirability of getting so large an income in his present state of affairs.

Scarcely had I delivered this message from Lord Mowbray—scarcely had I explained the nature of the proposal—than Cumberland jumped to his feet, and exclaimed, with vehemence bordering on passion—

“Never, by Heavens! Never—never—will I do so base an act as to sell my party! What! have I not been bad enough—have I not been a libertine, rake, gambler, idler, profligate—but must I brand myself as a base, trafficking wretch, who would make sale of himself? Never, Sir, never! I would never do so base an act as to sell my party!”

He astonished me with the turn he took, which was quite unexpected on my part.

“Look you, Wynville,” he cried ; “you are quite mistaken about me. I have been, I grieve to say, a very foolish person ; I have done fifty foolish acts, and I have been guilty of occasionally playing a mere actor’s part in politics. This I acknowledge with shame. I have affected violent enthusiasm for popular principles which I have not felt ; but, really, I was not worse than my neighbours, though, of course, that is no excuse. I have seen Whig members with a great hatred to the Roman Catholic religion, haranguing for Catholic emancipation, merely because it was then a party question ; and I have seen statesmen declaiming for the altar and throne, and turning their periods to the cant cry of our Protestant Constitution, established by our forefathers. It was no great wonder that a fellow like me should be something of a po-

litical player also—and, to say the truth, I did look on the House of Commons very much as a theatre; and, mark me, when you can get there yourself, you will be convinced that some of the greatest performers there would do honour to the profession of the sock and buskin. But, d— it! I am not so base a dog—so wretched a creature—as to accept a place from the people I have been abusing three years past. No, though I am sunk to be a pauper, I have not sunk to be a knave. I may have been reckless and imprudent in the day of my prosperity, but it never shall be said by friend or foe that Granby Cumberland, in the day of adversity, was a recreant to the side he espoused, and a traitor to the party in whose ranks he served. No, no; if the Tory party offered me all my fortune back again, on condition

of ratting to them, or giving my good-will to them for money, I'd die before I would consent. Let me be disgraced in the eyes of the world, but I will not be wilfully dishonoured in my own eyes, by my own act and deed. I will not have anything to do with them, to serve their party purposes."

"Bravo, my dear fellow!—you speak like a man—aye, like a *man*—and I have now every hope that you will, in this hour of adversity, act the man's part, and rise superior to circumstances. I hope everything from a fellow of so fine a spirit and resolute a temper. You may yet triumph over everything; so be of good cheer. But you appear to mistake the proposition that has been made to you, which was not that you should act for the ministerial party, but merely that you should resign your seat

now without delay, so as to give them a fair chance of getting in their candidate."

"Oh, I know it all. I know very well what they are driving at; but I will accommodate them in nothing—so the matter is ended."

I was really delighted to see the high spirit which Cumberland showed in this transaction, and it gave me great hopes that he would one day rise superior to his adverse fortune. I encouraged him to look forward, and zealously urged him to look to the bar as a profession. He was only thirty years of age, and with his experience in public life, and his knowledge of character, and his readiness as a fluent speaker, combined with an excellent appearance and a strong voice and constitution, I told him that he would be sure to get on with rapidity, once that he gave up dissipated habits.

But he was not so sanguine. His fall was so rapid and so stunning that he had not the elasticity of mind to undertake such an enterprise. However, his manful resistance to the offer from Government acted like a tonic on his system, and he was roused into manly animation, and continued undepressed while I was with him that evening.

CHAPTER XII.

FASCINATION—THE COUNTRY VISIT.

I RETURNED to town anxious to inform Lord Mowbray about the result of my mission to Cumberland. Lord Mowbray had let his family mansion in Grosvenor Square, and was residing at the time in a hotel in Jermyn Street. On calling upon him, I found Lord Mowbray very eager

about the proposal he had made to me, and he asked me at once, his black eyes lighting up with their usual twinkle—"Well, what success?"

I told him briefly, but strongly, of the manner in which the proposal had been received by Granby Cumberland.

"Well done, Brutus!" cried Lord Mowbray. "Bravo, Cassius, Gracchus, Leonidas, Andrew Marvell, and the rest of you! In this age, you have at least an imitator; but who would have thought that Granby Cumberland would play a heroic part? Well, Sir, we'll wait awhile. But, Mr. Wynville, I congratulate you on your going into public life under such high auspices as those of the Duke of Fleetwood. I may be of some little use in giving you hints about public life; and will you come down with me to-morrow to Mowbray's

Court, and stay till next week, and we will have some talk over things in general, as Castlereagh used to say? Eh! what say you?"

The reader may imagine with what eagerness I assented to the proposal of Lord Mowbray. The idea of again being domesticated under the same roof with Lady Jane, was most delightful to my mind; but one learns bad habits rapidly, and in Lord Mowbray's presence one insensibly caught his diplomatic artifice, and I dissembled my joy, while I politely expressed the pleasure I felt in accepting his invitation, and my gratification at finding myself the object of interest to him.

On the next day I left town in company with Lord Mowbray, travelling with him; and I was in a state of great joy at the pleasure of seeing Lady Jane in her own

home. But there was something tantalising in that very joy, as I ever and anon reflected that there was no chance of my ever being fortunate enough to gain her hand. I found her father a most pleasant travelling companion. He abounded in curious anecdotes of his contemporaries, and in the traditions and history of the last century; and some of his stories told pleasantly, and in a sharp, stirring style, would have delighted Sir Walter Scott, "that professed dealer in curious stories," as Lord Brougham called one whom the greatest poet of the nineteenth century called, "The Ariosto of the North."

Our arrival at Mowbray's Court was not expected, as it was supposed that Lord Mowbray's stay in town would have been longer; and at nine o'clock in the evening we surprised Lady Jane at her tea-table.

She came forward, and I thought that there was a pleasing surprise in her face when she saw who her father's companion was. Her face was animated with an agreeable expression, and her manner was certainly very cordial.

"You are very welcome to Mowbray's Court, Mr. Wynville. I did not expect so soon to have the pleasure of seeing you. You will find Mowbray's Court but a dull place after town, and you must not expect here the life of joy that we had at Kingsleigh House. We are here rather remote from a neighbourhood; and, besides—but you have not dined."

"Yes, dear," cried her father, "we dined on the way at the new inn at Marshfield. I heard the landlord is a rich fellow, and that he is going to get a farm in this county, and that he is meditating whether he will join

the blues or yellows. So I thought I might as well throw away a dinner on him ; and, accordingly, he gave us some confoundedly bad champagne, with tough beef-steak and cold ham, that were hard as adamant. I wanted to see what manner of man he was : and at election times a landlord of a large inn may become a very influential person."

This explained to me the reason of our staying to dine at a new inn on the road, where Lord Mowbray praised everything to the skies, smacked his lips after drinking some of the gooseberry champagne, and submitted to an extortionate bill with nonchalant grace. The manœuvrer appeared in every act of Lord Mowbray ; and I really began to fear that he had some design on me. But as I looked in his beautiful daughter's face, I cared not whe-

ther fifty plots were hatching against me.

Lady Jane, as mistress of a country house, pulled the bell, ordered supper without delay, desired the housekeeper to be sent for, and gave several directions. We were soon at supper, but Lady Jane did not join us. She sat in a chair near the fire, and rattled over all the small local news about their neighbours, for her father plied her with questions of all kinds. We supped in a quaint, angular little room, where there were dark-looking cabinet portraits, and curious old pieces of furniture of all kinds. The fire burnt cheerily, and on the large rug a noble greyhound stretched its form, basking in the blaze from the burning logs, the light from which shed a mellow tint over the room. Lady Jane was opposite to me, and I certainly enjoyed the scene before

me, after a long drive and a bad dinner at the Marshfield inn. The very comfort of our supper assumed an æsthetic form, as I observed the antiquated snuggerly in which we were refreshing ourselves, with the old portraits brought into a Rembrandt light by the sharp flashes from the blazing logs. Then the massive form of Lord Mowbray contrasted with his lovely daughter by his side. His broad forehead, bald at the crown; his masculine features, bore a hearty vigorous aspect, while he showed his perfect health of body in the youthful appetite with which he drove his knife into the venison pasty, and quaffed the good old October out of a quart goblet that one of his crusader ancestors might have toasted his "ladye-love" in. His daughter lounged back in her easy chair, occasionally giving directions to a servant, and seeing that her

father and his guest were attended to properly. As her superb figure, robed in a negligently elegant costume, caught my eye, and as I heard the sweetness of her silvery voice, I thought how blest would be the lot of him who could find a place in the heart of that fascinating creature, how enviable the fate of the man who could call Lady Jane his own!

“Mr. Wynville,” cried Lady Jane, laughing, “you must be acquainted with one of the customs at Mowbray’s Court. It is the first time that we have had the pleasure of receiving you here, and it is a custom that a guest on the first night should always sleep in the Haunted Chamber.”

“The Haunted Chamber!” cried I, with affected horror.

“Ah! Yes! indeed—the very room—no other room will receive you to-night.”

“I am bound to tell you, Wynville,” said Lord Mowbray, “that it is, nevertheless, one of the best-aired in the house; for we have always some strange guest here, nearly every week, and so, though it is possible you may see a ghost, it is not probable that you will be caught by a cold in the head.”

“There is every danger of spectres, but none of catarrhs, Mr. Wynville,” continued Lady Jane; “so have a care, and do not mock at the Haunted Chamber. But I see, Saunders has brought you the traveller’s cordial [the servant approached with a bowl of punch, made upon the recipe of Charles Fox, as Lord Mowbray soon assured me], so I will leave you to enjoy yourselves, and wish you a good-night.” And, so saying, Lady Jane rose, and took her leave, and as I opened the door of the back parlour, I

thought her lovelier, and my ears never drank in a more delicious music than her soft rich voice, as she simply said, with a courteous look, "Good night."

I returned to my seat, every sense filled with the impressions created on me by the sight of such a beauty, whose talents and brilliant accomplishments, and whose force of character, were not so dazzling to my senses as a certain freshness of manner and winning frankness of deportment, tempered with a dignity peculiar to herself. As I drank some of the capital punch with Lord Mowbray, I congratulated myself on being a guest, and on my sojourning in the same house with Lady Jane. The mention of Charles Fox's name suggested to Lord Mowbray several anecdotes of this great Whig, and while he talked over past times, fighting the political battles of the days of

the French revolutionary war, I pleased my mind with looking forward to the charm of intercourse with the bewitching daughter of the intriguing peer before me.

I was ushered into a bed-room that might have been supposed a fitting rendezvous for a ghost; so ancient was its furniture, and so venerable its appearance. There was a bed vast in its dimensions, and hung with curtains that kept off the cold air from the courtiers of Queen Elizabeth's times. The carpet was the newest furniture in the room, being so recent as the days of King William the Deliverer. The bed gear, however, was modern, and I saw that the neatness of the room was not sacrificed to antiquity. On the whole, I thought that the ghosts had selected a very comfortable room. I looked at the pictures on the walls. Some of them were not executed in the best style of art,

for I saw that they had been executed in days prior to the diffusion of the fine arts. In several of the faces portrayed, I recognised the unmistakeable features of the Mowbrays—the full dark eyes, the bold open face, the large and massive style of beauty that seemed hereditary in that ancient house. One or two dames portrayed with all the stiffness of *toupées*, and distended hoops, bore marks of family relationship to Lady Jane. The originals had long since vanished from this earth. They had gone from the courts where they had shone and glittered for a time. Their youth and loveliness were like a dream, or a vision, and now existed only in a fast-fading resemblance. Their lovers and their ardent admirers who had courted them and made love to them in the language talked by Mirabell or Millimont of Congreve, or by the Wal-

poles and Lady Wortleys of succeeding times—whither had they gone? Perchance they too had deified a Lady Jane in their time—perchance they had banqueted in imagination on the charms of one as lovely and dazzling as her whose form had so impressed my senses and my heart. They were gone. They and their companions—the loving and the loved—the rivals who had fretted at being supplanted, and the victors proud in the triumph of their suits; all had gone and passed away for ever. Life had been seen by them—snatched at—and briefly enjoyed; and now they who had revelled in pleasure—they who had exulted in successful ambition, the objects of mingled hate and admiration—whether statesmen towering over their contemporaries, or beauties whose smiles and frowns men watched with eager eyes—were now cold and crumbled in the tomb; their

names almost forgotten, and their memories unheeded by the generation of the day. And thus meditating on the vanity of this life, and bethinking myself that a hundred years more would leave the beauty I admired like those of her ancestors, and that my name and character would be forgotten with the crowd—I fell asleep, in the consciousness that though no spectre had appeared to scare me, still that gloomy thoughts had intruded themselves to chill the tide of joy that had animated me when I had set my feet within the time-honoured home of the Mowbrays.

CHAPTER XIII.

MORNING TALK—HERO WORSHIP.

THE gloomy turn of thought which I had insensibly fallen into on the previous night, vanished with the morn. Brightly the sun shone into my apartment, and young blood ran too gaily in the veins to stagnate under depression. I dressed with more care than usual, and descended to the breakfast-

room, anxious to pay my morning salutation to one who had enchanted me.

I found Lady Jane seated at the table. How beautiful she looked in her simple morning costume, dressed without the least attempt at coquetry or display, as she rose from her seat to accept my salutations, and began to rally me upon having slept in the Haunted Chamber. I told her that I had never enjoyed such slumbers, or more delightful dreams, looking at her with significant expression. I also protested against the notion of spectres, or ghosts, or wicked spirits, presuming to disturb a mansion where Lady Jane Mowbray resided. She received my gallantry with courteous air, and returned it with good-humoured raillery.

“Now, your compliments to me will make me blush, and fine gentlemen from town ought to have mercy on simple country

maidens, who rarely behold gayer cavaliers than the raw curate of the parish, or the motley company of parish doctors, attorneys, surveyors, and land agents, that beleaguer a peer's country residence. The neighbouring squires are too old for gaiety and gallantry; their sons are all spruce and smart as city apprentices on Sunday, and nearly as vulgar in their tone. The very best of them can talk of nought but college honours, and the most ambitious of them would have their heads turned with a ticket for Almack's. So really I must cry mercy, when you attack me with your compliments. Nay, if you will persevere, I will turn my revenge, and when you have been guilty of the first speech in Parliament, why then I will assail you with such praises of your wit and eloquence, as will make you forget the 'hear, hear' of honourable members."

“ So then, Lady Jane, you think that both sexes are alike—one wishes to be praised for beauty, and the other for talents.”

“ And the same regimen should serve for both—self-denial; therefore, I will practise humility in denying myself the pleasure of your compliments, and then you, being edified by my example, will deny yourself the applause I shall give you when you obtain *éclat* in St. Stephen’s.”

The appearance of Lord Mowbray cut short the conversation. We went to breakfast, and enjoyed a pleasant cheerful meal, in which raillery, anecdotes, and amusing information were blended together. We breakfasted in a sort of library. The table was laid near the central fireplace. Four or five dogs insisted in taking up their position in an immediate vicinity. The old greyhound, whose acquaintance I

had made before—a couple of tan lurchers, expensive pets of their fine owner—a bull terrier, of whose sagacity I heard marvellous stories, and whose face was as honest and bold as any Englishman's alive—and a water spaniel, with long ears and bushy tail, were grouped around, and were evidently quite at home. I heard the history of each and all of these dogs from Lady Jane, for they were her property especially. One she had rescued from some persons who were torturing it in a fight, and all of them had some particular claims on her regards; and certainly more affectionate subjects no sovereign possessed, for while they disdained to notice either Lord Mowbray or any of the servants, they carefully watched the lightest motion from Lady Jane, and seemed by their profound attachment to her, to be quite capable of understanding what she was saying.

“ This room, Wynville,” said Lord Mowbray, “ is Lady Jane’s bower, and there are Lady Jane’s lovers.”

“ Very sincere lovers they are, too,” said Lady Jane. “ Ponto—Cæsar—Frolic—are you not my most devoted and faithful cavaliers? Off; down, sir; no more of your ardent attentions. Well, dogs are certainly creatures from whom man might learn many a lesson.”

“ Yes,” said Lord Mowbray, “ their fidelity is perfectly inhuman!”

“ One who has been a cabinet minister may,” said I, “ be excused for so severe a speech, but dogs are universal favourites, and are enough of themselves to prove the designing power of nature’s Author.”

The conversation turned from dogs to horses; and I soon found that Lady Jane was a keen observer of the various objects

of country life, and was intimately familiar with all the interesting descriptions of Natural History. Dogs, birds, and horses, were objects of her admiration, and her father pointed to one of the walls of the room where several of her favourites were depicted by her own bold, dashing pencil. I observed what a thoroughly, home-like, and comfortable room was the library, in which we were breakfasting. It looked out upon the park, and we could see the deer trooping under the trees. There were two alcoves in the apartment completely filled with books, and a large table in the great bay window covered with periodicals and newspapers. I saw the blue and buff of the *Edinburgh*, and the quakerly garb of the *Quarterly*.

“ There is an essay in the last *Edinburgh Review*, written with singular brilliancy,

on Mr. Hallam's History of England. I suppose that it is from the pen of Mr. Mackenzie, of whom my friend Gabriel Cleveland speaks so often."

"Of course no one but Mackenzie could have written anything so critical, so brilliant, and so universally readable."

"His command of language, and his rapidity and vivacity of style, are very remarkable. He is decidedly the best of all the *Quarterly* essayists. Lord Dudley, when here a couple of months since, made some exceptions to his style, and said it was too brilliant, and that popular effect was aimed at too much; but surely Mr. Mackenzie's is the very opposite of anything common-place?"

"My dear," said Lord Mowbray, "it would be impossible to please Lord Dudley in anything. He is a purist in politics

and style, and can never give his whole support to anybody, whether minister or author."

"Lord Dudley himself is a capital writer: his style is remarkably eloquent and pure."

"Yes; his essay on Charles Fox," said Lord Mowbray, "is very clever."

"It is a very unfair view of Fox's fame," observed Lady Jane. "I read it some time ago, and could see little more in it than the fault-finding of a professed critic. He disputes Mr. Fox's pretensions to Greek learning; condemns his literary style; and brings out into strong relief the glaring inconsistencies of Mr. Fox's life, and then cries, 'See what a man the world admired as great.' But this is a ridiculous way of trying to *pooh-pooh* a famous Englishman out of history's page."

"And you admire Fox?" said I, inquiringly.

“I know of his talents only by tradition, for his speeches worried me to read them, and I threw them aside as tiresome. But I have seen the eyes flash of those who knew the man, as they tried to describe him to me—staggering under his emotions, while torrents of argument flowed from his eloquent lips—and I have heard the voice of friends and foes falter when they spoke of the man himself.”

“Oh!” said Lord Mowbray, “Fox was a magnificent creature; he was the source of desperate evil to the popular party, and he influenced and misled the public mind on many occasions—but after all he was a splendid fellow. By the way, Lord Dudley is quite right in scoffing at the idea of Fox being a thorough-going reformer; he merely declaimed in favour of a popular cry, but his own private opinion was in favour of an

aristocratic government. I have it from one who served the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and who actually read the despatches with his own eyes, that the most veteran intriguer could not take more artful steps to destroy the reform party in Ireland, than Charles Fox."

And then Lord Mowbray went into a long history about the political scandal of Mr. Fox, urging that Flood's Volunteers should receive no countenance, and that the rotten-borough system should be kept up.

"What effect will the diffusion of such journals as the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* have upon events?" asked Lady Jane.

"They must of course circulate ideas with great rapidity, amongst classes not accessible to literature before."

"Yes; but in popularising literature, will they not be apt to vulgarise it? Num-

bers who read short and sparkling essays, will not discuss books, or study systems. I can suppose that they will increase general intelligence, and just like newspapers of a high kind, give us the news and correspondence of the republic of letters in an accessible form."

"You could not praise them more highly," said I; "you have stated their social utility."

"Yes; but observe that they will not make *minds*. They will not, like the poets or master authors of our literature, create characters. They treat of great subjects with so much flippancy, and aim at the agreeable and smart on all topics, that their judgments are often most ridiculously wrong."

"Ridiculously wrong," said Lord Mowbray.

“ Look at the ribaldry with which Mr. Jeffrey assails Wordsworth—the Mr. Jeffrey who takes, as the first poet of the age—Crabbe! yes, Crabbe, the first of poets—Crabbe—Ha! ha! ha! that ‘ Pope in worsted stockings,’ as the ‘ *Rejected Addresses* ’ calls him—Crabbe, the first of poets, in the days of Wordsworth, Moore, Scott, and Byron!”

“ Crabbe has great knowledge of life—of characters. As an observer, he is unrivalled in what, as a lawyer, I would call the circumstantiality of his observations.”

“ Circumstantiality of a poet!” said Lady Jane. “ But has he the soaring imagination,—the gay and genial fancy, revelling in its own gorgeous illusions? Has his mind the excursive genius which bounds out of the world of conventional routine, and dwells in an airy sphere, which can be

known only to those with the divinity of genius? No! his range is limited to earth. When his muse preaches, he can only give us morality—the ideas of moral systems: he never depicts the awful, and startling, and mysterious grandeur of religion. Reality, and again, reality—the visible—the actual—the merely natural,—such is Crabbe. But a portrait painter like Reynolds, might tell more—that the limner should snatch a grace beyond the reach of art, and that this grace can only be seized by the idealising faculty. Crabbe cannot get beyond the every-day life of humanity—the sublime and the beautiful are alike denied to him.”

“Oh! Lady Jane, how can you say that? Surely you cannot recollect Phœbe Dawson—that exquisite passage was read to Charles Fox on his death-bed.”

“Aye!” cried Lord Mowbray, “when dining one day at Peel’s, I heard Sir Walter allude to the passage as being really sublime, and he repeated the lines with emotion.”

“Yes! but it was a mere flash of the sublime—a faint ray of inspiration, whose gleam marks the dead level of the rest of his poetry—and that very fact of Mr. Fox’s calling for the poetry of Crabbe to be read to him on his death-bed was the best puff that ever was given to any poet.”

I was amused and pleased with the freshness of Lady Jane’s mind. Her remarks came from her without the least appearance of art, and there was a pleasant knowledge of character and principles of nature scattered through her conversation. She talked neither like a fine lady of fashion, nor like a learned lady, but as an English gentle-

woman, who had spent most of her life in the society of accomplished persons, who had seen much of the world, and whose judgment was matured by a large and extended experience.

I spent a very pleasant time at Mowbray's Court, and was more fascinated by the young and beautiful hostess. When I returned, often and often would her image intrude itself upon my studies.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THIS period of my life was becoming of great importance to me. The politics of the time were stirring; and the Whigs of that day, with whom I was allied not less by family ties than by my own connections, were then playing a deep game for power. Europe was in one of its periodical ferments. The ancient societies were again giving

proofs that some fresh re-constructions were needed, and a fiat had gone forth that change should be the order of the day.

Assured as I was by several of the leading Whigs of that time that they would never lend themselves to revolutionary measures, and that they would firmly stand upon any reform measures which they introduced, I felt no qualms of conscience in taking on me the responsibilities of a political reformer, and I started in political life a great opponent of rotten boroughs. Yet I was myself the member for a rotten borough, and young as I was in these days, it would have been very difficult for me to have found my way into the House of Commons, except by a rotten borough.

Entering into the House of Commons gave me much mental excitement. There is nothing less like the reality than the sort

of assembly which some persons suppose the House of Commons to be. In reality it is more like a huge over-grown committee—a great parish vestry—than like the grave and decorous assembly which those who have not been members of it imagine it is like. Its ordinary business is prosy and dull beyond description, and its ordinary speaking is heavy and tame. In the days of which I am treating, the speaking was better than at present. There were greater models before the members. Several of the House, as it was then constituted, had listened to Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan. They had all heard the best speeches of Canning, had witnessed Brougham in his best days, when his incessant energy appeared like inspiration, and when his ready powers of making up a subject for debate deceived people into the idea of his

possessing boundless knowledge. They had also heard Mr. Plunket, a masculine advocate of moderate politics; Sir Francis Burdett, the model of a patrician demagogue; Mr. Denman, a graceful gownsman whose eloquence did not smell of the hackneyed pleaders of the courts of law; Mr. Harvey, a terse and spirited speaker, and a ready and spirited debater, with a racy and natural English style; and several others, who were sufficient to set the fashion, and prevent the House lending too easy an ear to the intrepid bores who rush full pounce upon the unfortunate senate like a mob of Scotch cousins on a cabinet minister, or a gang of poor players to a new country manager.

Several of the best speakers of the Cambridge Union, and not a few of the rising celebrities of the Inns of Court, were then

in the House of Commons. Amongst them Barrington Mackenzie and Penrose were the most conspicuous, and great things were expected from both. There is in the House of Commons a feeling like that which pervades the *habitués* of the Theatre of La Scala. There is the greatest anxiety to hear a new voice, and the talents of new candidates for public favours are always heralded by being spoken of previously. Penrose at the start had the advantage of Mackenzie, even before either of them had opened his lips in debate. He was a lively rattler in conversation, and possessed much of what may be called "hob-nob brilliancy;" he was quick and sharp in repartee, told stories capitally, was much of a quiz, dropped epigrams as fast as Prince Esterhazy does diamonds in a waltz, and was one of the pleasantest, liveliest, gayest creatures that

ever figured in parliamentary circles—so delicate, so fanciful, so poetical, that Sydney Smith predicted once that he would become the Ariel of the House of Commons.

Maclaurin gave me the friendly advice upon which I acted, to become a man of business to my party as soon as possible, and not care about mere noisy reputation at first. “Make yourself useful to your leaders and to your party; there are several ways of doing so besides talking in debate, which often is not wanted at all in young members. Store your mind with knowledge of social facts, and classify these facts; and, above all, study attentively and comprehensively one of the leading questions of the day. The exact knowledge of one great subject will make you impatient of information upon other questions, and will form your mind to statesmanship. The *agrémens*

of eloquence must also be consulted. Learn the art of elocution from some old actor, not so much for the purpose of acquiring gesture from him, as obtaining the art of managing the voice. Unless you carefully train your voice when young, it will be almost useless to attempt to improve when old."

I had been advised to keep back, and not to speak for some time; but I hated to be looked on as a promising young man doing nothing, and I wished to dare my fate. The public were then indignant at the manner in which jobbing was carried on in certain departments, and great anger was felt at the mode in which ministers had spent some money upon persons unworthy of public honour.

It happened by chance towards midnight, that, on some financial statement, one of

the ministers had made a very artful statement, in which he endeavoured to blind the eyes of opposition to what had really been done in a case which caused some scandal at the time. The House for the moment was deceived, and the Whigs were disappointed, as the minister would escape. It so happened that in a conversation with St. Leger, I had chanced to learn, that a person whom it was the interest of the Government to represent as in narrow and straitened circumstances, was really rich, and St. Leger had made a boast about the use to which some of the money had been applied. The committee reports served me with some evidence on the point in discussion, and the minister's speech had made an admission, the consequences of which I now saw very clearly, from what I had heard from St. Leger. Armed with these facts, I took little time to

hesitate. When the minister sat down, I rose, resolved not to make a speech, but to go straight to the mark without any circumlocution. I told the House exactly what I knew of the subject, in a brief but pithy and decided manner. I pointed to three flaws in the minister's speech; noticed his studious omission of all reference to a part of the question on which information was required by the public. I contradicted his assertion of certain statistics, and supplied the House with *data* on which it could easily perceive the fallacies of the minister. In a quiet and gentlemanly manner I expressed my distrust of the whole statement the minister so speciously and artfully made, and suggested that if a young member like myself saw so much to find fault with, probably more experienced members, when they had leisure to examine the

question more, would perceive still greater fallacies in the minister. Then with an expression of the utmost candour, I begged of the House to pause before coming to a conclusion, and, assuming a bolder tone, wound up with calling on Government to adjourn the question for some days at least, and sat down amidst loud cheers from my partisans, and my ears were gratified still further by hearing that peculiar buzz through the House, which always follows a good speech.

I made a decided hit. My speech was the very kind of thing wanted at this time by the Whigs, who were anxious to have as many thorns as possible sticking in the cabinet, and the Manvers job was an excellent stimulant to party excitement. The heavy but influential Lord Althorp turned round, and said, so that I could hear the words,

“That’s the sort of man we want, not your mere debating-club spouters.” Several members offered me their congratulations, and I was specially pleased with the notice taken of me by the Speaker—the artful and agreeable Manners Sutton—a man whom I found, by subsequent experience, to have been an admirable judge of parliamentary performances.

My table the next day was covered with cards and invitations. On the following evening, I was at a select party, and found myself an object of interest. My opinion was deferentially asked by several persons, and introductions to me were sought. My family were also much elated, and I could observe the satisfaction with which the old Whig gentleman—my fading father—looked towards his son.

Success in the House of Commons! the

very *acmé* of notoriety and present applause. Fame in literature or the fine arts is restricted within comparatively narrow limits; but every one reads a newspaper, and the sayings and doings of the Members of Parliament are talked of and discussed in countless circles.

“True,” said Maclaurin, one night as we were discussing the subject, “parliamentary fame, while it lasts, may be said to be the most predominant and social of all kinds of celebrity. A famous parliamentary speaker is observed by the court, the cabinet, the Houses of Lords and Commons, all the press; in short, all the public. He certainly enjoys the ‘All hail to-day.’ But how much has he of the ‘All hail hereafter?’ Ah! there is the point in which literary reputation avenges itself gloriously. How many Wyndhams, and Carterets, and Sir William Yonges — all brilliant speakers

in England's Augustan age—fade away before the fame of Addison or Pope! Bolingbroke, the great writer, the composer of splendid and animated epistles, instinct with sense and knowledge of life, survives the orator and the statesman. People care little now for the treaty of Utrecht; but while England has a constitution, his 'Dissertation on Parties' will be read. Lord Chatham exists as a great shade, a mighty name; while Johnson breathes as a living man in Boswell."

"Carent quia vate sacro," said T.; "if the English House of Commons had a Boswell to paint Chatham in the senate, then perhaps this great commoner would exist again as familiarly to the popular imagination as the great lexicographer himself."

"The only piece of writing we possess, in which Chatham lives again, is that extraor-

dinary piece of composition by Grattan, commencing,—‘The Secretary stood alone. Modern degeneracy had not reached him. Original and unaccommodating, his character had the august hardihood of antiquity.’ I know few pieces of prose in any literature so nervous, so dramatic, so picturesquely coloured. It is the transfiguration of a great political hero, as it appeared to the excited ideality of the brilliant and gifted Grattan—himself one of the greatest and most exalted spirits these islands have produced.”

“Our friend Barrington Mackenzie, meditates one day writing the history of England, and he could fill every chapter with gorgeously coloured portraits, much in the style of the picture of Chatham you allude to.”

“Barrington Mackenzie has most extra-

ordinary powers; but I doubt the substantiality of his genius, and I am sceptical about his possessing the higher order of the thinking faculty. His powers are very extraordinary of their kind; his talent is dazzling; but he often dazzles to delude. Has he seriousness and gravity of character? Is his life exalted by a lofty moral purpose? Is he of that august and lofty order of spirits, who contemn present superiority, and toil for posthumous and honestly-earned fame? It strikes me that he is a rhetorician of the first class in his literature, rather than a gifted and original thinker, as in Parliament he shows that he is more of a declaimer than a debater. He uses strong and brave words, but would he do strong and brave deeds?"

"I think that you are unjust, Sir Charles, in exacting, that a man of Mackenzie's lite-

rary culture, should be also a great man of action. Who can be great men in letters and affairs at the same time?"

"You mistake me," replied Maclaurin; "I mean by brave words and deeds—*bravery in putting forth a man's whole thoughts before his readers.* Would Mackenzie, for instance, follow the example of Hume and Gibbon, and intimate plainly to the reader his own opinions on the greatest and grandest question to the solution of which the human mind can be applied? No! Mackenzie would deal in a satirical tone with the abuses of our ecclesiastical system. He would castigate the parsons, and sneer at the fanaticism of the Dissenting interest. He would round splendid periods about England and Englishmen, and hide from numbers the reality of his opinions."

"'Pon my soul, Sir Charles," said Pen-

rose, " my friend Barrington Mackenzie, is as sincere a Whig as can be found."

" Yes, in a conventional sense, he is undoubtedly a very good party man; and in these times every man is a party man; but Mackenzie exaggerates opinions, and affects interest when he feels indifference. It may be hypercritical; but in his essays and his speaking, there is the eternal twang of a chief of some college debating club. There is a want in his character of that homeliness—that natural simplicity, beyond all affectation, which I have ever found to be the companion of greatness. Mackenzie is that sort of man who comes under the class of artist rather than author. I fear that he will prove merely an artist—writing for public effect—reproducing, with wonderful brilliancy, the received opinions of others, who, with more originality of speculation,

but less brilliancy of style, propounded them. I doubt, in short, the reality of Mackenzie; first, as a man, and next, as an author; for every really great author must first be a great man at heart. He must scorn all the vulgar applause of his own time, and regard the opinions of the impartial few, more than the cheers of the applauding multitude. Gibbon and Hume wrote to the few of all ages and times. Gibbon's labour and learning were enormous; and Hume spent years upon years in forming his remarkable style. Mackenzie's style of writing is that of the rhetorician; he always has an eye to *effect, effect, effect*. He never would encounter boldly the moral or religious delusions of his own time and country, supposing that his views in philosophy were of a profound, searching, or original character. If he attempt the history of

England, he will jumble together his politics and his literature, and spoil the latter with the virus of his party spirit."

"Well," said I, "Heaven help authors. The critics must find fault always. They never can praise even the greatest talents with heartiness. I would say that Mackenzie is just the man who could give reality to English history."

"He certainly is the man who will give readability to any history he may write," said Penrose. "If Mackenzie were to publish a History of Timbuctoo, or Memoirs of the Society of Quakers, he would find readers by tens of thousands, all of whom he would entertain and delight by his pictures of life and graphic delineation of characters."

"Mackenzie, I should suppose," observed myself, "would accomplish in English history what Thierry has done for large portions

of the old French story. He would give colour, life, and form, to what, in other hands, has been treated methodically in a cold, critical style. I agree with Sir Charles Maclaurin to some extent, that Mackenzie is more of an artist than an author—more of a painter of what has been, than as the suggester of what should be; and for merely philosophical contemplations, it is very possible that he wants the higher powers of severe abstraction. But in our prose literature of late years has not the style been too cold, and have not mere explorers, diggers-up of forgotten manuscripts, usurped the titles of historians? Put Mr. John Thompson, F.S.A., or Mr. Peter Robinson, F.R.S., into the lumber-room of some great peer's country mansion, and they will forthwith announce great historical discoveries to the world; print buttery books by

the score, and give typographical honours to the hieroglyphical documents of bailiffs and under-stewards of the days of Queen Bess; seize hold of every great name they chance to meet in the list of guests at my lord's castle three centuries ago; and give a *rechauffé* of Camden, Fuller, and other venerable folk. Mackenzie would suck the matter out of their huge tomes in a couple of hours, and recompose it in as many pages, extracting the essence of a library, and distilling it in one of his essays, delighting at once the learned and unlearned; writing at once so that all could understand, and all could admire, with thought for the few, with style and story for the multitude."

CHAPTER XV.

A BALL-ROOM RENCONTRE.

AT a ball one night at Lord Belvale's, I was listening to a prosy dissertation on poor laws, from a Somersetshire squire, who had escorted his daughters to the scene of pleasure, when my eye was suddenly caught by a vision that shot its electric fire through my veins. It was she! and in an instant I was by her side. Her eyes now

flashed pleurably as she saw me, and I was most cordially received.

“Ah! what have we simple folk to say now? But away with raillery, and take my sincere congratulations on your parliamentary success. My father says that you are (as he phrases it), a sure card for your party, and that you are sure to rise high in office.”

“Rather let me hope to succeed in engaging your hand for the next dance.”

“Nay! I have promised to dance with Lord Morpeth; but after that I am disengaged, and will be ready to hear you modestly disclaim all title to merit and success. Is it not delightful to be praised, and to deserve it; to do something brilliant, and find every one dazzled and delighted; to achieve great things in a party, and to see your merit acknowledged by the pleased

looks of a thousand gratified faces? But here's my partner."

And she was gone. I leaned against the wall, and watched her brilliant form as she glided through the quadrille. Her eyes, her graceful neck, her beautiful bust; her voluptuous figure, swam before me. I forgot all in the world but her; as she floated before me in the mazes of the dance, I imbibed delicious pleasure, and thought neither of praises nor Parliament, of my first speech, or what the Lord of the Treasury said of it. I felt that the possession of her would be more delightful than a draught of fame, and the passion of ambition, which had for a long time mastered me, yielded to that of love.

I was shortly again by her side, and learned that she was come to town only for a brief time, and that she was about to pay

a visit to Lady Carryl, her near relative, who dwelt close to my own place, Wycombe. She intended to visit Lady Carryl in the course of the next week.

“ I do not like London,” said Lady Jane ; “ its excitement is to me monotonous and uninteresting. Babylon appears always *blazé*, and everybody here talks and seems to think in such a hard, cold, worldly style. All very clever no doubt, but very cold and cheerless. I could tolerate a little more of silliness, if there were more of good nature and simplicity in London society ; but all those who lead a regular London life, whether men or women, become petrifications of humanity—very sharp and brilliant, but freezingly cold ! ”

“ London, Lady Jane, is not the place to look for freshness or simplicity. And no great city is —— ”

“Nay! I have met in Paris with fresh old people—men and women—who retained all the susceptibility of youth, and were joyous and simple after a long life in the French metropolis.”

“That is the character of the old Gael. Unlike the old Saxon or Norman, the aged Gael is noted for the singular vivacity which he possesses in his old age.”

“Well, I cannot pretend to follow you into a discussion on the character of different races; but whatever cause be assigned, there is certainly a hardness of character in our London society that is extremely chilling. Perhaps it is because there is in London such a constant endeavour to keep up a position, as it is called; but I confess that whenever I get back to Mowbray’s Court, after a sojourn in town, I always feel the force of Cowper’s line—

“ ‘God made the country, and man made the town.’ ”

“ And yet the stirring grandeur of a London life, does not that affect you, Lady Jane? The splendour of society, the blaze of great European reputation, the fascinations of brilliant wits, and the infinite diversity of characters to be found in London life, have these no attractions for you?”

“ Glitter—glitter—glitter—noise—noise—noise. There is no *morale* in London life. The world passes before us as in a procession; the wits are cold and hard, and the variety of characters to be met with in London may be encountered by gentlemen at clubs and in circles which ladies cannot know; but, for myself, the last place where I should expect to meet with a friend would be in London, where a person may meet a thousand, nay, ten thousand acquaintances,

and have hardly one friend. No; it is only in the country that one sees real character developed. The mask of conventionalism is there thrown off, and mind comes forth without the wearisome affectation of manner that is universal in the great city. But speaking of the country, do you often reside at Wycombe Hall, your place in Surrey?"

"No; rarely. What could I do by myself there? The gentry round are stupid folk; there is very little society in the neighbourhood; and since my uncle's death I have scarcely resided there at all."

"It seems a pretty place. I was shown it, the other day, from a distance, on my road to London."

"Now, indeed, that it has found favour in your eyes, it has acquired a value to me that it never had before."

“Just so. There you are, thoroughly Londonized, with your cut-and-dry compliments, served up with the smirking satisfaction of a *marchand des bons mots*. Nay, you are just as bad as the rest, only I thought, after my lecture, that you would not so soon offend. But I protest here come Lord Guston and Mr. Percy, both going to solicit my hand to dance.”

I learned with regret that Lady Jane was leaving town on the next morning. I had again an opportunity of conversing with her before the ball broke up, and for the second time I had the pleasure of hearing her express her gratification at my success as a parliamentary speaker. I thrilled as she said “that she knew from the first time that she saw me that I had talents, and would succeed in the world.” I valued her praise more than all the approbation of my parliamentary friends.

Excited with the pleasure I had experienced in meeting so suddenly with one so admired, and roused with the gratification of a beautiful woman's praises, I felt more joyous than I had ever been before. Dismissing my servant and equipage, I strolled homewards. The night was fine. All the lamps were glittering, and above, the stars were shining in the blue vault of heaven. Oh! what pleasure I felt that night! I recollect it now as keenly as if it were but yesterday. My feelings were undefined, but even then I had half-resolved to propose to Lady Jane, and ask her to be mine. I dreamed happy dreams as I walked along the streets, smoking a cigar; and I took no notice of the idle and motley loiterers of the night.

As I hurried along Pall Mall, a figure in a cloak suddenly turned the corner, and the

light from a lamp fell upon a face that I did not at first recognise—so wan, so haggard, so altered was the once handsome form of Granby Cumberland. I had not heard of him for some time, though I had done my best to find out his residence. I followed him immediately.

“Cumberland!” said I, “is this fair—to hide yourself from an old friend?”

“Ah! Wynville—is that you? By Jove, it is so long since I met with a friend, that I had forgotten the sound of the voice of a true one.”

“My dear fellow, I am grieved at your flying from the world as you do. I have done my best to find you out, but I could not track you.”

“Oh! I am ashamed of myself. I am ashamed of my past life—of all the follies I have committed; and there is something

worse that preys on my mind. The heartlessness of the world oppresses me. You know that creature Bessy Harrison, whose fortune I made, and upon whom I lavished thousands."

"Well! What of her?"

"I went to her this very day, at her villa in St. John's Wood. She is now, you know, the mistress of the Marquis of Highcourt, who has boundless influence with the Colonial Secretary, and who could get me provided for easily. Well, I wanted Bessy—why do I call her by a name which was once dear to me?—I wanted her to say a kind word for me to the marquis. On my name being announced, I was ushered into a splendidly furnished room, and there was Madame Marcelline (for that is her present *nom de guerre*). She received me with apparent kindness, and seemed to exult in

the splendour by which she was surrounded. But scarcely had I told her of my utterly ruined fortunes, and of the destruction which had suddenly come upon me, than she rapidly changed her manner, and with callous impudence and brutal levity cried, 'And so, I suppose that you have come here on a begging mission! What have I to say to your beggary, Sir? And I am sure 'twasn't I that made you spend your money so foolishly. Really, I can't conceive why you should want me to teaze the marquis. I am sure that he has business enough on his hands, without providing for all the unfortunates.' And thus she went on. By Heaven! such a wretch as that woman I scarcely believe exists."

"Her class were never the people to look for truth or sincerity of heart amongst. But you surprise me telling me of such

abominable heartlessness as the *ci-devant* Bessy Harrison's; for I remember that, on the very first day I saw her, that you told me that Bessy was such a good girl, and used to support all her family."

"Ah! she was then only half corrupt. But since that time she has become an entirely altered person. I warrant you that her father and mother get little of her money now. Oh! Wynville, what a terrible difference there is between being a rich fool and a poor fool! When I was a rich fool, what a capital fellow I was voted to be! and what legions of friends I had! But *now* that I'm a poor fool—"

"Nay! Cumberland, 'tis of no use to rail against humanity. The world is doubtless hard and cruel enough, but there is a great deal of good in it. You may find, before long, that you have more persons kindly

disposed to you than you are aware of. But tell me, where do you live? You know that you need have no secrets from me."

"In this street," said he. We were then in Clipstone Street, Fitzroy Square—a low street, and I found that Cumberland had a shabby pair of apartments in one of the plainest houses in the street. I went into his lodgings, and sat down by his humble fireside for awhile, and with difficulty succeeded in getting him to promise to come and dine with me the next evening at my chambers in the Temple.

His energy had been of a desultory kind, and the resolution to study for the bar had oozed out of his mind. But I hoped to bring about a radical change in him, and force him to exert himself.

He came to dine with me the next day,

and we had a cheerful evening together, in which I set before him the course he ought to pursue. I enlarged upon the opportunities which he would have as a barrister, and suggested to him that he should practise before the committees of the House of Commons, where, with a little preliminary training, he would have a field peculiarly suited to his keen and ready faculties. We drank a couple of bottles of claret, and having got Cumberland into a flow of his old good spirits, I persuaded him to accompany me to the Haymarket Theatre to see the after-piece.

As we lounged into the theatre, we loitered for awhile about the lobbies, and entered into the saloon to see who were there; for Cumberland had resolved to act upon my advice, pluck up his spirits, assume a calm and unconcerned countenance, and

repay the heartlessness of the world by an imperious and stoical deportment. The room was filled with its habitual occupants. Up and down were walking the noisy revellers and the abandoned victims of vice and folly. Gorgeously but vulgarly dressed, were sauntering about the glittering improprieties of the time; smiling with desperation, and with broken or frozen hearts assuming the looks of joy and happiness. Vain endeavour! for beneath the rouge and pearl-powder, the ravages of mental care and bodily disease were visible.

While standing looking at the crowd, I felt my arm suddenly and convulsively twitched by Cumberland, who exclaimed—

“ Good Heavens! Wynville, look there—look there!”

I turned in the direction in which he pointed, and, talking to two or three dissi-

pated young men, her face plastered with rouge, and her person flaunting in the livery of vice, was Cumberland's wife!

There she stood, within a few feet of us, the very woman whom I had seen betrothed to him at the altar, his blooming and blushing bride! We were riveted to the ground; and I was just recovering my presence of mind to drag Cumberland away, when his wife, with a roisterer's laugh, wheeled round suddenly, and came full upon us, face to face, before we could escape her.

The instant she saw us she shrieked aloud in a scream that pierced through the room, and wound along the lobbies and corridor of the theatre. She ran wildly from the room, and fell down a stair-case, and was picked up with blood flowing from her mouth and nose.

"The woman's mad!" cried several voices;

“call a policeman.” Soon the incident ceased to attract notice; the mob of motley loungers and saunterers again commingled with the vicious and debased, and Cumberland and I emerged from the theatre, unnoticed by any person as being in any-wise connected with the screaming woman, who had for a moment disturbed the seekers after dissipation. We walked together in the streets without speaking, and it was not until we found ourselves in the Mall in St. James’s Park, that Cumberland broke forth into exclamations of his misery. He clenched his fist, and ground his teeth. How well do I recollect the agony stamped upon his face, as the moonlight fell upon it, revealing a chaos of passions convulsing the inward man, and lacerating his galled and tortured spirit with indescribable misery!

CHAPTER XVI.

A STARRY NIGHT—THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS.

ON that night I took Cumberland home with me to my chambers in the Temple, and had him to stay with me for three or four days, while I tried to cheer him up, and sought to induce him to turn his talents to a practical purpose. He recovered somewhat of his calmness, and evidently valued highly the friendly offices I rendered him.

“All is not hollow in the world,” said he, pressing my arm, as we strolled through the Temple Gardens one evening. “All are not Bessy Harrisons — I should say, Madame Marcellines of the stage.”

“Even in Marcelline’s profession, there are honest and amiable natures that have not surrendered their spirits to the sordid spirit of the world. By the way, I will tell you who was asking after you kindly the other day.”

“Who,” said Cumberland, “who remembers the ruined spendthrift?”

“It was Miss Dormer, the actress. I met her at a supper party, and she asked with interest about you, and told me of a piece of kindness which you once rendered her on the evening of a theatrical riot. She told me of some acts of goodness of yours to poor players in other days, which she, at least, had not forgotten.”

“Poor, dear Dormer!—a woman whom I scarcely ever noticed: I remember, though, that she kept at a distance all of us rakes and prodigals, and never encouraged our addresses. Well, I’m obliged to her for thinking of me.”

That night I induced him to accompany me to the very theatre where Miss Dormer was playing. We went into the boxes, and enjoyed her sprightly, graceful, and unexaggerated rendering of *Violante* in the *Wonder*. Between the acts, we got into the green-room, in which there were mingled with the company a good many loungers—some members of the Sheridan Club—amongst whom was Gabriel Cleveland. Madame Marcelline, who was engaged as a singer, was in the room, flaunting with an excess of gaudy clothes, and when she saw Cumberland enter the room with me, she

smiled with some affected conceit, and laughed louder than before. Miss Dormer was talking near the fire-place to Mr. Charles Kemble, who had lounged into the green-room to ask the news, and have a quiet talk.

I observed in the mode in which Cumberland was saluted, that there was an air of compassion affected by some of the actors, and his presence by no means caused the sensation it would have done in those days when his purse was open, and when he hospitably entertained every gay and reckless votary of pleasure. The difference between his reception now, and his treatment by the same persons in other days, must have wounded Cumberland much.

We walked up to Miss Dormer, who received us with her quiet and well-bred grace, receiving our attentions with lady-

like ease and dignity. She treated Cumberland just in the same way she had ever done, and did not turn coldly away from him, as some other actresses were disposed to have done, until Miss Dormer set the example of good breeding—ought I to say, good feeling?

“I am so glad to meet with you, Mr. Wynville,” said the graceful actress, “because I want you to do me a favour.”

“Any wishes of Miss Dormer will command my attention.”

“Nay! it is not a very great one, though I’m not sure I am quite right in asking it. But you must know that I am giving a little ball on next Wednesday night in honour of the *début* of a fair young friend of mine, who promises to sustain the traditional fame of her family, and I want partners for all the ladies who have accepted

my invitations. Now pray will you be one of my guests for that night? and I am sure Mr. Cumberland will follow your example; and I give you a *carte blanche* to bring each of you any three gentlemen you choose from your clubs or the House of Commons."

"I shall only be too happy to join your revels; who could refuse Miss Dormer, not even Cumberland himself!"

"Nay! I am not now a ball-going man," said Cumberland; "I have not been at such diversions for three months back. I am now a poor devil, and not worth dancing with ——."

"Oh! Mr. Cumberland, if worldly reverses are to deprive a gentleman not only of his fortunes, but of his claim to enter society, the world must be made a great deal harder than it is. Often have I thought of Rosalind's exclamation, 'Alas! how full

of bars this weary working-day world is!’ And I have seen and known much of the troubles of life. My grandfather rode in his chariot and four, and was sheriff of his county, and here am I compelled to go into public to earn my bread. But I keep up my heart, and take the world as it is. ‘Once a gentleman always a gentleman,’ is with me a truism; and I assure you, Mr. Cumberland, that I never can forget your kindness to me at a time when I wanted protection much.”

“Your words give me infinite pleasure, and I could wish that many of my former friends had as amiable dispositions as Miss Dormer.”

“Well, a truce to compliments, and will you show that you believe in my sincerity by coming to my little ball along with Mr. Wynville?”

Cumberland had just promised to attend the fair actress's ball, when the prompter's call-boy appeared, calling loudly for Miss Dormer, who, gathering up her white satin train, swept out of the green-room to encounter Don Felix in a burst of Spanish jealousy. We returned to our box, and enjoyed the transition of Miss Dormer to her stage-voice and manner, looking as if she had been thinking of nothing all the night but the comedy in which she played a leading part.

Cumberland was again beginning to recover his natural spirits, and was feeling some renewed interest in life. But the unhappy circumstances attending his unfortunate marriage preyed heavily upon his mind, and cast him into the deepest dejection. The scandal attending it was however only partly public, and by not many

people ; for though Mrs. Delmain did her best to spread the story in all directions, and lost no opportunity in telling it, still as it was known that she had strong reasons for being vindictive against Granby Cumberland, and besides, as her tongue was not proverbial for the love of truth, few persons credited her tale as being entirely true. It was known, however, that the marriage was a most calamitous one, and that fact, joined to Cumberland's ruined circumstances, was sufficient to sink him low in the opinion of that numerous description of persons who hate to think or feel about their ruined acquaintances.

It was with great difficulty that I was enabled to induce Cumberland to consent to accompany me to Miss Dormer's ball. She lived in a plain house in Woburn Square, but furnished, however, with a good

deal of quiet elegance, and very different from the showy rooms of actresses in general. The furniture was neither gaudy nor glaring. The walls were hung with choice engravings; and a few pretty pictures—presents from admiring artists—were intermingled. Everything in the house bespoke the reign of a lady—of one who was a credit to her sex. I observed, with curious eye, some relics of old plate, which had been preserved from the wreck of her family; and Miss Dormer's mother, seated quietly in her arm-chair, looking on the dancers, was a picture of the old English gentlewoman, dressed with quiet taste, and her grey locks peeping out beneath her fine lace cap. Miss Dormer herself was in a flow of spirits, and was rejoiced to see that scarce any of her guests had disappointed her. We had scarcely any of the female

celebrities of the stage present, for the simple reason that Miss Dormer would not be intimate with them. Some few, however, were present. In one of the corners of the drawing-room was seated a tall young lady in black, with a mournful expression in her countenance, and with as superb a pair of eyes as ever glittered in a Spanish head. She had a foreign look; and her marked features, her air and manner, had the appearance of high blood. She was a young actress, then called "The Widow Merton," in weeds for a husband whom she had passionately loved. She looked as if she were born to impersonate a tragedy queen, and might have caused some feelings of jealousy to float across the bosom of the young and beautiful *débutante* of that day, whose classic features and noble look of genius told her brilliant and famous name without

its being announced. But one who was then glorious and peerless in Shakspeare's "Juliet," and without a rival in the *Julia* of the *Hunchback*, had naught to fear from the Widow Merton, who, despite of her then sorrowful face, had from nature a right merry heart throbbing under her fair bosom—a laugh that would drive the blue devils out of the mind of a dethroned king,—a pair of eyes that might have given a sense of loveliness to a Whitefriar, and a pair of ruby lips that would have tempted an anchorite.

The rooms looked gay with a merry company; and it was pleasant to see the mixture in the apartments. Here you heard Dormer's artistic voice telling a funny story to a peer of the realm; and there stood a young poetess, full of sonnets and scraps of scandal, trying to soothe the keen,

but cold nature, of a cynical dispenser of newspaper reputation, who called himself an essayist, and thought himself a critic scarcely inferior to Schlegel. Yonder came an old dame of the last generation, who had often supped at Mrs. Crewe's with Sheridan and Fox, talking of Mrs. Fitzherbert to a yawning Member of Parliament; and an American tourist, bedizened with a fine waistcoat, and all agape for anecdotes of kings and aristocracy. Whirling in the waltz was a comic actress, whose servant-maids upon the stage were like nature, and whose acting, in the drawing-room, of a lady's character seemed like burlesque; while her husband, who made pits and galleries roar at his broad mirth, was more irresistibly comic when donning the gravity of a private person. Almost every second person was worth looking at; and the old familiar

tones of well-known public servants sounded strangely to the ear. One turned almost instinctively to look for the stage and green curtain, and expected to hear the prompter's bell.

It was particularly amusing to hear the varieties of conversation going on, which had the effect of cross-readings, as we walked about the apartments. "His Romeo is decidedly the best in"—"the House of Commons, you know, is so altered now-a-days." "But some of the new plays are"—"decidedly the worst features of the times." "And then suppose the king were to"—"appear the same night as Scrub in the afterpiece, after having performed Richard the Third." "I never read his delightful dramas without thinking him"—"such an interesting and lady-like old woman, and such a love of a lace cap." "But then, you

know, at his time of life to"—“expect supper very shortly.” “Every one so admires her”—“matchless impudence, beyond any recorded of dead or living political adventurers.”

Miss Dormer was the favourite of the night, and acted her part of hostess admirably, with a smile and a word for all. She was danced with by some of the men of fashion who were present, and towards supper came up to Cumberland, and asked him why he was not dancing, and quizzed him for not asking her to be his partner. She took his arm with a smile when he solicited her hand; and he really looked like himself as his charming partner coaxed him into good humour, and laughed him into spirits.

“Well, I could be happy if I were married to such a woman,” said Cumberland, as we strolled home together. “My ideas of

happiness would be to be united to a Miss Dormer. On the accursed day of my marriage, I really believed that I was about to drink deeply of happiness, and I had made up my mind to be entirely an altered man. Surely there never was a man who drew a more miserable lot than mine. Oh, that I could recal the past, and live over again the early years of my misspent existence!"

"We all learn to regret our early follies, and we can only have amends by making the most of whatever opportunities are left. But it is now one o'clock, and I promised to look in at a supper party to-night in the heathenish region of Stamford Street, on the Surrey side of the water. I am to meet some Templars and Cambridge men there. So adieu for to-night."

I called a cab, and rattled over the water,

expecting to meet Penrose, who was to have been the lion of the supper party, and to have heard some of the songs of Vivian Joyeuse sung melodiously by one of the best voices in London. But Penrose was not there, and the party was stupid, and I decamped as soon as I could.

Walking homeward across Waterloo Bridge, I was revolving the sight before me, and thinking of the tremendous moral spectacle presented by the swarming population pent into the great and dusky city, whose churches and towers rose here and there against the horizon. The river rolled beneath, and I listened to its waters breaking against the piers, and glanced at the black barges sleeping in their sombre shadows, while the water hoarsely rippled across their bows. The rumble of vehicles was heard across the water, as the never-

silent Strand was rattled over by other revellers like myself returning from various scenes of gaiety or dissipation. The vast pile of St. Paul's rose in dark splendour; seen in the darkling light, it looked a vast shadowy monument of the material sublime, and reminded the beholder of the powers of the insects congregated in the great hive of industry around. London at night! Surely there is something that wakens up with vivid fire and peculiar power the fancy of a moralizing beholder who gazes upon that vast and murkily splendid scene. Life, in its intensity—in its historical suggestiveness and actual earnestness—is presented with overwhelming force to the mind, and the real drama of existence presses upon the understanding, which vainly tries to discern the plot amidst the countless moral perplexities and ever-changing scenes which

the mind recalls on thinking of the world of London. I felt on that night that the time to enjoy the sublime of London life, and to meditate upon its tremendous reality, was after the hours of midnight, while the stars glittered in the sky overhead, speaking of the heaven beyond the grave, and the river flowed before me, recalling the calm power of nature, in contrast with the great city, seething with human life, and reeking of the vices and passions of the flesh. I thought of the Eternal Eye that regards every aim and act of the most insignificant creature that crawls out its existence in that vast hive of life, of that stupendous Power which fixed the firmament, and made the waters flow, and holds the form of nature in the hollow of His hand; when, as I strolled, musing on the scene before me, my eye was caught by a female figure striding along,

and apparently in great agitation of mind. Her dress, a flaring one of velvet and satin, told that she was one of the shunned ones of her sex. Before I had time to think, I saw her turn hastily, and clamber up the battlements of the bridge. Her figure flashed before me for a moment, as her clothes were caught by the night breeze, while the hapless creature sprang madly into the air, and in an instant afterwards the strong plash upon the water told the fate of the maddened being that had rushed into the presence of her God.

The body rose again to the surface, and I saw it floating where some feeble rays of light were falling upon the black waters of the Thames. I shouted aloud to a barge-man that was punting ashore to one of the wharves on the river side. But he heard me not. I rushed desperately to the end of

the bridge, darted down the stairs, and halloed again! But my voice was not heeded, though I shouted aloud. The tide was running down, and another barge drifted in view, whose men heard me, and the small boat was rowed a-shore to me by a boy. I jumped into it, and with desperation that struck the lad with amazement, I seized the sculls, and rowed rapidly against the current. Several minutes had then elapsed, and where was the body? I strained my eyes to view, and pulled hither and thither, with eager force, but the darkness of the river made it difficult to see with clearness. One time I thought I saw it, and pulled in front to it, but it was a mistake. Ha! there it was! No—no—'twas again a mistake. The summer morning was beginning to dawn, and the cold chill morning air came upon me cheerlessly, as I gave up all thought

of rescuing the lost one, when, rowing close to Blackfriars Bridge, I saw an object that looked like what I was in search of. It was carried by the stream against a pier of the bridge. 'Twas she! I grasped desperately at her, and with some peril brought her body out of the water into the small boat, and rowed ashore. She was motionless and without animation. "Take her to the surgery hard by," cried a watchman, who lent his ready aid. I carried her dripping body, with all the expedition I could, into the first house open, where a blazing fire of a tap-room promised heat to restore her, if not too late. A couple of Irish medical students, whose brogue even now rings in my ears, lent willing aid. "So—this way—lay her so. Jerry—tear a blanket off some of the beds above, and give us brandy to chafe her. Aisy, Sir—aisy : keep her head up, if

you plaze." And the young Paddy, with generous manliness, tried to inflate her lungs with his own breath, thus adopting a method which some men would recoil from, while the other chafed her limbs. But of no avail were the remedies. She was stone dead; and one of the young students said that perhaps she died of apoplexy before she had touched the water. She was laid out upon the floor, and a female servant sadly arranged the dead one's gear, when a light held clear to the countenance revealed to my horrified eyes—the well-remembered features of Harriet Duckenfield — the drowned wife of Granby Cumberland!

CHAPTER XVII.

LOVE-MAKING—INTERRUPTION.

It was some time afterwards that I chanced to take it into my head to go down to Wycombe Hall, a place I seldom visited. I wished to read quietly for a few days. It was a day in summer, and desiring my servant to take on the horses to the hall, I walked forward myself from Croydon. After having been for some months in town,

the air and breezes of the country came upon me with delicious enjoyment. I walked across Purley Downs, and smelt the heath, and saw the rath primrose peeping from the ground. Nature was coming forth in her cheerful attire, and ambitious hopes were forgotten. I thought of Lady Jane, and of her keen enjoyment of the country, and my mind revelled in recalling her image to the view, as I thought of the happy days that I had passed at Mowbray's Court.

I arrived at the borders of the demesne of Wycombe Hall, and leaving the road got in upon a field path, which conducted to a romantic spot that I had spent some trouble in decorating when a growing youth. I had confined the waters of a stream, and with some little art had made a picturesque waterfall, and had placed near it an imitation of an ancient ruin. There was a rustic seat

near at hand, and the view was particularly extensive and beautiful. In very clear weather the towers of Windsor Castle could be plainly seen.

I stood for a moment contemplating the view, and thinking of other and early days, when my heart, to use the emphatic language of the liturgy, was “unspotted with the world.” I noted the change in my own feelings from the enthusiasm of early youth, and with sober rapture, gazed upon a lovely scene. Ambition had taken the place of poetry. The most poetical part about me now was the love I felt for the flower of Mowbray’s Court.

I turned from the scenery to walk to the hall, and passed from a shrubbery walk into a green garden, where there was an old terrace, famous for its row of venerable yews. I got into the garden through the

gardener's lodge, without going round to the front entrance, and passed towards the terrace, from the rear of which I entered.

I came suddenly upon it, turning the corner, and beheld with mingled feelings of surprise and ecstasy—Lady Jane Mowbray.

She was walking by herself on the terrace, within a few feet of me, and seemed wrapt in thought, when I surprised her. No sooner did she see me than she started, and blushed deeply as I advanced to meet her.

“I am no less rejoiced to meet you, Lady Jane, than elated at finding you in a region, of which I call myself the master.”

“Mr. Wynville—you may be surprised indeed, at meeting me here; but the interview, I can assure you, is not of my seeking.”

“Nay! do not cast me down thus.”

“But indeed I must tell you why you see me here. My aunt, Lady Musgrave,

with whom I have been staying, is in poor health, and fancies driving about the country. She had not seen these yews and this beautiful lawn, since the time when she was a school girl, and she took a fancy to drive in, and ask your housekeeper to see the place. She has just walked in to rest for a minute or two, and thus most unexpectedly you behold myself trespassing in your presence.

“And may that trespass be repeated again and again! Oh! Lady Jane, happy he who shall claim the privilege of detaining you for life in his own home!” And I looked with animation at her while I spoke; but affecting not to understand me, she quickly answered—

“Oh! of course, now that I have been surprised in a trespass, I must hear all the eloquence of gallantry and compliments from Mr. Wynville.”

“Nay, Lady Jane! I protest that I do not wish to address you in the idle language of *badinage*, but I have longed for an opportunity that I might tell you—”

“Here’s Lady Musgrave,” cried Lady Jane, and just as I was in the very act of declaring my feelings, Lady Musgrave, leaning on her gold-headed cane, appeared near to us, and interrupted our conversation.

Lady Musgrave was a tall and attenuated old lady with a most striking face, a bright and keen-looking pair of grey eyes, and a nose that might have served as the exact type of the aquiline kind. She spoke with a nervous stammer, that had prevented her from shining in society, and displaying those abilities which she eminently possessed.

“Oh! indeed, Mr. Wynville, I am glad to—to make—make your acquaintance.

'Tis a long time since your mother and I were at school in Yorkshire together. Ah! you have a look of her about the eyes—but you have a Wyn—Wynvillenose and mouth. You see, my niece and I were staying in this neighbourhood; and I thought of looking at your fine garden, and took the liberty of coming in to see your place. The house—housekeeper told us that you were in town."

"It gives me the greatest pleasure to see you here, Lady Musgrave, but you have not yet seen all the beauties of this place. You have not seen the waterfall and the river, and the fine prospect towards Windsor. But first you must allow me to order you refreshments after your drive."

"Nay! it is too far for an old woman like me to walk to, but show it to my niece; she enjoys such things, and I will await your

return. Lady Jane will, I am sure, be glad to see it."

"Oh! it is too late to go; recollect that we have five miles to drive home, and you said that you would dine early to-day."

"Nay, child; I insist on your going to see the river."

"Surely, Lady Jane," said I, "you will not refuse to accede to Lady Musgrave's wishes. Can I induce you to walk to look at my improvements?"

I saw that Lady Jane had half a wish to go, and that she had some struggling feelings against it, as the recollection of the conversation in which I had been interrupted, was present to her mind. However joking and laughing, she consented to go and look at the waterfall. Lady Musgrave strolled back to the house, and we were to be away only for five minutes.

The walk to the waterfall wound through a wood, and I experienced exquisite enjoyment as I found myself walking by the side of the lovely woman I admired, and heard the silvery tones of her sweet voice. A slight blush was on her face, and I noticed that she was anxious to direct my attention to surrounding objects. We were soon at the most favourable point of view, and Lady Jane was really gratified with the picturesque scenery, complimented me on my talents as a landscape gardener, and gazed with admiration on the splendid view over the cultivated lands of Surrey.

“ You certainly have a charming residence here. I had no idea that Wycombe Hall was so fine a place, and I am surprised that you do not make more use of it than you do.”

“ The place is lovely, and perhaps it

would be more agreeable for a married man than for a bachelor, and certainly I should feel very happy here, if I could only succeed in the object that is dearest to my heart."

"But what place is that?" said Lady Jane, evidently turning the conversation, with a wish to avoid what she suspected was coming on—and she looked towards Squire Beauchamp's in the distance.

Dashing all hesitation aside, I said eagerly—

"Lady Jane, we are now alone, and I pray you forgive me for my abruptness in thus addressing you, but I cannot longer resist telling you of the feelings with which you impressed me from the very first time I saw you."

"Mr. Wynville——"

"Nay! let me declare to you that there is no woman on earth whom I regard as

you, and that you have called forth in me feelings which are felt with ardour only once in our lives. Never before I had seen you, did I feel what ever since has been at my heart. You must yourself—from a hundred trivial circumstances—have guessed at my feelings, and I tell you with all the earnestness of one who speaks only what he feels, that, if you refuse my hand, you will not only inflict upon me the greatest unhappiness, but I will never wed with any one else.”

I looked with eagerness at Lady Jane, as I spoke thus. Her face was somewhat flushed, but her self-possession was not in any way disturbed. She appeared a little grave, but perfectly composed. Her eyes, however, sparkled with even more than their wonted animation.

“Mr. Wynville,” she began, “I cannot

deny that your declaration comes to me abruptly, but I will not affect to deny that I have perceived in your manner that you were disposed to make to me such a declaration as I have now heard from you, and perhaps I ought to blame myself for not having adopted a more guarded manner towards you. But I regret that you must suffer the pain which you say that you will experience, if I do not lend an ear to your proposals."

"What! do you thus reject me without a moment's consideration?"

"You have taken me quite unawares, and when I expected to see a landscape only, I find that I have been invited to a declaration of affection, which your reflection must tell you is a circumstance calculated not a little to disturb any woman who has feelings at all. I will not deny that my sense of

candour makes me speak with frankness bordering on the verge of simplicity itself; that your very many good qualities and your undeniable talents have often impressed me with what I may call, without impropriety, flattering—yes, I will say flattering—opinions of you, Mr. Wynville; but to say that I am so prejudiced in your favour that I could answer you now as you wish, would be not the fact.”

“ Yet, Lady Jane, do not be hasty in pronouncing your opinion so decidedly; I could not forbear declaring my sentiments; I could not resist seizing the opportunity presented by accident. Perhaps, if I had not met you to-day, I might have deferred, until you had known me better, the moment of the confession of my admiration. Oh! could you all this time, when we were at Kingsleigh and at Mowbray’s Court together—

could you doubt, I say, the sentiment which animated me?"

"Indeed I assure you that I think of it, and it is the very worst part of the matter, for I have to blame myself for being too friendly to you in my manner, and I fear that you have been misled, where I had no intention whatever of encouraging your attentions. Coquetry, or aught approaching to it, is a fault that I abhor, and I most sincerely hope that you will not impute levity to me in receiving your attentions with favour, while now I am compelled to reply unfavourably to your request."

"But I cannot expect that you should answer me decidedly to-day; I feel as you yourself declare, that I have taken you unawares, and that I could not expect to receive an answer all at once. And I will not press for your answer. I will not—

oh! I could not bear to take what has fallen from you here as your final decision upon a point that vitally affects my happiness and peace of mind; and I entreat that you will regard the words I have spoken to you merely as the declaration of my sentiments, and do not answer me all at once."

"But you have placed me in a position wherein I must speak frankly. That position is not of my choice, and excuse me for saying that it is not one of sentimentalism. The affair of marriage is too serious a matter to keep up delusions about, and I fear there are so many obstacles to my marriage with any one, that I could not, under any circumstances, be induced to answer you in the manner you desire."

"Obstacles to your marriage with any one, Lady Jane!"

"You must not mind the words that fall

from me; there are family secrets that I cannot speak of to you, and I beg that you will not lay stress on such words as you allude to. The fact is that I cannot—but here we are at your house, and our conversation must have an end now, and assuring you that I wish you well, and will always be happy of your welfare, I have only to hope that you will not misplace your affections where, from a variety of causes, they could not be returned; but see, here is your housekeeper come out in search of us.”

“Lady Musgrave, Mem, sent me out to see where your ladyship was. Lady Musgrave, Mem, is in the saloon awaiting you,” said the officious Margetts, who was in such a fuss about the ladies who had so unexpectedly dropped in to see her house, that she did not take the least notice of myself, though it was months since she had seen me.

We went up stairs to a saloon quietly furnished, where was a picture of my mother, by Harlowe, which Lady Musgrave repeatedly stammered forth her admiration of. It was most certainly a very beautiful picture, and I observed that Lady Jane stood opposite to it for a considerable time.

“Do you think, Lady Jane,” said Lady Musgrave, “that it is like Mr. Wyn—Wynville, my dear?”

“Oh! the very—that is to say—there is very much likeness in some features, but not in others.”

I thought at first that she was going to say that this picture was the very image of Mr. —, and that she had then caught herself, in fear of appearing to pay me too great a compliment. In point of fact, every one who saw it recognised in it a strong likeness between my mother and myself.

In the meanwhile, Margetts set forth refreshments, of which Lady Musgrave partook, but Lady Jane could only be induced to drink a glass of water.

“Do not, dear, take too much of cold water; you seem,” said Lady Musgrave, “very heated after your walk to the waterfall. I am sure I am very glad that I did not walk so far with you.”

At these last words Lady Jane’s eyes met mine, and the sense of equivoque suggesting comical ideas to the mind, Lady Jane smiled with ineffable meekness, and I with grave face said—

“Indeed I am also very glad that you did not walk there to-day; but I trust that on the next occasion when you favour me with a visit, that you will come with us to the waterfall.”

“Well, Mr. Wyn—Wynville, I was thinking that you would waive ceremony, and

dine with us to-morrow, at Ashendon. My brother, Lord Mowbray, is to dine with us, and he will take home Lady Jane on the next day. Perhaps, you would come over to us—and why not come early?—and to our little church: the walk across the fields would be so pleasant for you.”

I was in doubt whether I should accept the invitation or not. I feared that Lady Jane might not wish me to accept it. Lady Musgrave continued—“I’m sure Lady Jane will join heartily in pressing you to come.”

This last speech was an awkward one; but Lady Jane laughed.

“Oh!—a gentleman who trusts to ladies to press him would not be proper company. His gallantry should yield to one, and not require another fair lady to entreat him.”

“Lady Musgrave, then, I accept your invitation with pleasure;” and soon after, I handed my visitors into their carriage.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNTRY CHURCH—HAPPY HOURS.

WHEN the noise of the carriage wheels had died away, I walked rapidly to the waterfall where I had had such an interesting scene a few moments before. My mind was much excited, and I did not well know whether Lady Jane's reception of my addresses had been favourable or otherwise. She had spoken of obstacles to her union

with any one! She had alluded to family secrets—what could they be? She had been more composed under the circumstance of an ardent declaration of affection having been made to her, than I could have expected. Did she feel any warm affection towards me? Did she merely use words of course in professing her good opinion of me? I contrasted her present explanation of her feelings with that unspoken language of pleasure which beamed in her eyes when I used to be in her company on former occasions, at Kingsleigh and Mowbray's Court.

In such reflections I passed that evening, and Lady Jane was never absent from my mind. I determined to adopt the hint of Lady Musgrave, and walk across the fields to church at Ashendon, as I should meet Lady Jane there, and I should have a longer

time to spend in her company by doing so. The morning was fine, and I was in a happy state of feeling, as I walked through the fields, and heard the birds singing with the joy of the fine season. The country looked particularly lovely, and as I heard the church bell of Ashendon sweet thoughts came across my mind, while the odour of the fields, and the bright sunshine, and the glad face of the land, gave me again those pleasurable feelings of delight in external nature which had made a large part of my happiness in my early manhood.

Ashendon consisted of a small richly wooded park, seated on the summit of a hill which rose steeply from the champaign land. A large brick house, three stories high, was at the corner of the park, and the house was built in the heavy style introduced with King William. The windows were mas-

sively framed, and some rich tracery was around the hall door. At one side of the house was a garden laid out in the old style. The place was by no means splendid, yet it had a look of that substantial comfort which makes the remarkable feature of the country houses of England. An aviary and handsome greenhouse at one side of the mansion gave it some look of elegance; and five or six livery servants bustling here and there showed that the owner lived in a style of opulent comfort.

About one hundred yards from the mansion was the church, seated in the park, and divided by a rural road, such as one sees in the pictures of Constable. The church was extremely small, and not less ancient than diminutive. With difficulty, it could have held seventy persons. Its walls were hoary with time, and were covered with ivy,

through which, here and there, peeped the grey stone. If one had been told that the little church had been built in the time of Edward the Confessor, the assertion would have been credited, so ancient was everything. Around the walls was a small churchyard, in which lay the dust of generations.

The appearance of the church inside was as antique as outside. The light came in dim religious lines through its old painted windows, and the fantastic legends traced on the glass told that the artist had been dead for centuries. There was not a solitary symptom of ready-made antiquity in the place, which had nothing in common with those pretty little mushroom morsels of mediæval, done up in so artificial and modern a style by Puseyites, who ransack all Wardour Street for the apparatus of mechanical religionism. The enormous size

of the marble monuments on the walls was one of the most noticeable facts in Ashendon Church. There was a great monument to one of the Lords Musgrave, executed *temp.* 1623, which filled one half of the walls, and the family at Ashendon had so monopolised the mural extent of the little church, that the walls must have been enlarged if it had been necessary to pay tributes to the memory of other members of the congregation.

Half-a-dozen labourers and their families were around the church-doors as I entered it, and was shown by the sexton to a seat. A bluff farmer was seated in one of the pews, and at either side of him were a pair of luscious-looking daughters, blooming with rustic health and beauty, and looking very conscious that they were in their Sunday clothes. Soon came in several domestics,

male and female, from Ashendon House, and in a short time in walked (leaning on her niece) Lady Musgrave.

Lady Jane did not at first perceive that I was seated in the pew opposite her; when she did, she only slightly recognised my presence, and turned her eyes fast upon her prayer-book. The clergyman, a family chaplain of Ashendon, soon came in, and service began. The words of the liturgy, that most beautiful of compositions (derived from inspired writings, if not inspired itself) rarely affected me more than on that day, in that secluded and quiet country church. Service performed in that antique temple, before that quiet congregation, was far more worthy than the same religious exercises in the crowded churches of May Fair.

How well do I remember that summer

Sunday! Methinks I still see the fleecy white clouds scouring across the blue sky, and feel the soft warm breeze on my cheek. Oh, how happy and yet anxious were the hours I spent near Lady Jane! We walked about the garden and the grounds, and talked of poetry and nature. There was a certain consciousness of the position in which we stood to each other, that gave a turn of seriousness to our conversation; but yet her voice never fell more sweetly on my ear, than when she recited some of the eloquent sayings of Jeremy Taylor on contentedness, and rapturously held forth.

“Oh, yes, there is no writer on religion like dear, venerable Jeremy Taylor! His words make one feel the grandeur and solemnity of life. They thrill one with a sense of the sublime, and lift us beyond the world of dull actuality around us. No;

Fenelon is not equal to the illustrious old Bishop of Down. Fenelon's style is wire-drawn, his piety spread out into gold-leaf ; but there are deep rich veins of natural eloquence in Jeremy Taylor, which will bear constant re-perusal."

"It is said that his writings smell of the grave."

"Rather should it be said that they have a flavour of the flowers of Paradise beyond the grave. His richness, his brilliant colouring, his style, fraught with the learning of many tongues, and tessellated with quotations from all authors, are all the more attractive because relieved at times by a plain and homely cast of thought. And, oh! there is one reason why I love him beyond all writers on religion, because his beauty and his genius can be felt by the poor and by the humble in their cottages,

as well as by the philosophers and divines in their colleges. I have myself at times read him by the bedside of some poor people, and I saw that his words fell like the tones of solemn music upon the wearied, way-worn soul, tired of the tribulations of existence."

"In that faculty of authorship, he resembles Shakspeare more than any other author I know. There is a directness about him, along with his sublimity; still he damps me often with the tragic pall which he casts over human life."

"He lived in an age when a great tragedy was being performed; and the solemnity of a great monarch led to trial and to death, and the sight of a tremendous rebellion, were enough to give additional pathos to a mind like his. He often alludes to the scenes that passed before his view."

And so we continued to talk of many topics of life and literature while we strolled around the grounds. Every hour added to the fascination which Lady Jane exercised over me. I felt more and more intoxicated with her charms. During the brief space of my sojourn, my passion for her had increased to the highest pitch upon that day ; and when her father, Lord Mowbray, little knowing of the declaration I had made, pressed me to go down in that week to Mowbray's Court, how eagerly I accepted his invitation, with what rapture, with what joy!

CHAPTER XIX.

HOPES AND FEARS—FAMILY SECRETS.

I LEFT Wycombe Hall for Mowbray's Court with feelings of the most intense nature. I resolved to push my suit with energy, and determined to engage Lady Jane, if possible, to enter into a union with me. The idea of possessing her alone occupied my mind. Parliament and its honours were forgotten by me; and I re-

ceived more than one chiding from the leaders of my party for inattention to their wishes. I had promised to write a couple of pamphlets, embodying the opinions of Lord Grey, and intended for circulation amongst Members of the House of Commons and journalists; but I did not keep those promises; for how could I bear with upset rotten boroughs, and irresponsible ministers, and the balance of our inestimable constitution, when I was dreaming all the time of a certain brilliant pair of black eyes, and a matchless mouth, and ruby lips, and of a noble and splendid figure—the fitting form for a proud and lofty spirit, that had deep and strong feelings, and a soaring nature, utterly unlike the padded buckram souls of the artificial world of fashionable life?

She was my first love. She was the wo-

man who woke up in my soul the tenderest and most passionate of human sentiments. I thought of her at morning and at eve—in my noonday walks, and in my study amongst my books, her image would flit across my imagination, alluring me with its lovely form, and thrilling me with exquisite revellings of the fancy. I felt that all my happiness was at stake upon the question of my being accepted by her; and ever and anon the banqueting of my imagination was crossed by cold and ghastly doubts, which scared me for the moment, like visions of Banquo flitting before Macbeth.

The country in the neighbourhood of Mowbray's Court wore, to me, a peculiarly attractive appearance, doubtless because of my having associated its scenes with the presence of the being who had first made

me feel the passion of love. Such is the witchery of this passion, that all around the loved one becomes imbued with colours of happiness and beauty in the eyes of the worshipper, who sees everything during the time of his illusion as connected with the form of the fair spirit who has concentrated and awakened all his affections. Life had obtained more interest in my eyes than when my soul was entirely occupied with ambitious views.

On the day of my arrival at Mowbray's Court, there was a dinner party there; two or three of the neighbouring squires, the rector of the parish and his curate, a country physician, and the member for a neighbouring borough, formed the company. The squires, their wives, and their daughters, were in all the puny importance of landed gentry, and Lady Jane

was an object of awful admiration to the young ladies, who stared at her during the whole evening, and never took their eyes off her person; noticing how every pin was put into her dress, looking at her shoes and her scarf, and her lace kerchief, and everything that was hers. The young curate raw and reserved, who had only been freshly caught at Oxford, looked up to Lady Jane with fearful gaze, and with most unclerical timidity. It was one of the stupid commonplace dinners that peers are obliged to give in the country for the purpose of popularizing amongst their neighbours; and strange as it may appear, the stupid country dinners given by great peers to the small squirearchy and the parsons have an admirable effect in keeping up the constitution, and in diffusing an admiration for the nobility. Upon this point I once heard Sir Charles Maclaurin

quote a sentence of Lord Burleigh's, from one of his letters to his son, in which single pithy sentence is contained the entire gist of Lord Chesterfield's famous letters to *his* son. The sentence is—

“Right humanity taketh such a hold on the multitude of man, that you can more easily move mankind by unprofitable courtesies than by churlish benefits.”

Lady Jane was very quiet and affable to her guests, and without pretending to be familiar, she placed them all at their ease, except the unfortunate country curate, who quaked whenever she addressed a chance word to him. He upset a rummer during the dinner, which disconcerted the unfortunate clerk during all the night, covered him with confusion at the time, and left him a prey to miserable *mauvaise honte*. The squires' daughters were quite easy in their manners when compared with him.

I had no opportunity on that evening of having much conversation with Lady Jane, but on the next morning I joined her after breakfast, as she strolled out in the direction of the park.

“I fear,” said I, “that my presence at Mowbray’s Court may not be entirely pleasing to you, though I have come hither on Lord Mowbray’s invitation; and I should be very sorry to intrude on you at this time, however great may be the gratification which I experience in seeing you.”

“Surely, there is no reason,” said Lady Jane, turning her face towards me, and looking with calm sweetness, “that your company should be disagreeable to me.”

“Nay! I should not speak too hastily of myself, but yet what would you have me say? for I cannot conceal the feelings I entertain for you, and I cannot resist the opportunity of declaring for you the admiration

which I have felt and feel for you, and my ardent wish that you would not turn coldly from my suit. Oh! Lady Jane, in this lovely park, amidst this beautiful scenery, under the venerable oaks that have shaded your ancestors for generations, I proffer you what from your admirers of higher rank and prouder pretensions you will not receive, the sincere and earnest love of one who admires you for yourself—not merely for the charms of your person, but for your character and talents.”

“This is not language that I am at all warranted in hearing. As I told you in the conversation we had at Wycombe Hall, I long since discovered that you were about placing your affections on me, and it was not without uneasiness that I perceived the fact. I told you also that I was peculiarly placed, and to be frank with you, I can

scarcely, in the affair of matrimony, call myself my own mistress. I spoke of family secrets also, as you may remember."

"Am I to understand that you are positively engaged, Lady Jane?"

"No—yes—that is—no—you see what embarrassments you cause by your questions; indeed your suit to me places me in a most difficult position, and I can give you no answer further than you already received at Wycombe Hall."

There was no displeasure whatever visible in the manner of Lady Jane, while she spoke thus. I could not discover the faintest symptoms of aversion to me; but there was an air of reserve—of awkwardness—and of gravity, which excited my curiosity considerably.

"You have said too much or too little, Lady Jane; but believe me that I desire to

cause you no embarrassment, and nothing would annoy me more than to give sensations approaching to pain in any degree, however faintly. But you little know how you have entered into my heart and soul. I never loved until I saw you, and I never can love any one else. It is no mere idle feeling of passing emotion, but my love for you is a passion which will not change with time. It has changed all my feelings on many subjects; before I knew you, I was devoted to politics, and full of public ambition, but now the only ambition I have is to be accepted by you. Oh! Lady Jane, you little know how devoted I am to you, and—”

“Mr. Wynville, I cannot hear you further—indeed—I doubt whether I should not have stopped you sooner, but I do not know how to give you the proper answer, without being apparently harsh or insensible

to your preference of me; but the fact is—” and she stopped with hesitation of manner. She seemed as if she had something particular to say, and feared to say it.

“Speak on, I pray you, you are addressing yourself to one, Lady Jane, who is a gentleman—and who, come what may, will never abuse your confidence.”

“I am sure indeed that you have the true heart and nature of a gentleman; but yet I feel on such an occasion great difficulty in speaking even when I know that no unfair advantage will be taken of me.”

“You may repose perfect confidence in me, and I pray you, speak on without reserve.”

“Well—then—frankly I must tell you in confidence that I fear—that is, I believe any union between us, Mr. Wynville, is entirely out of the question. My family would vehemently oppose it.”

“Your family oppose it, Lady Jane! But would one of your superior nature and decision of character, consent to be led, entirely led, on the subject of your marriage by your family? Surely you would exercise your own opinion on the question of choosing a partner for life.”

“It is the very vigour of will which you assign to my character that induces me to pay deference to the interests of my family. I am more of a Mowbray than a mere woman, and the sentiments of my family are of considerable importance to my own happiness.”

“I am quite sure that not one of your famous family need blush in the slightest degree at an alliance with a Wynville, of Wynville Manor.”

“You totally mistake me. I respect your family as much as all the world does.

Your ancestors have played an honourable part in history; but, nevertheless, I tell you—aye, may I tell you the plain truth?”

“Do, pray do, Lady Jane,” cried I with the greatest eagerness.

She mused for a time, and seemed quite uncertain whether she should proceed or not. How beautifully she looked that moment, as with her finger on her lip, and her eyes bent on the ground, she walked along, her countenance being much graver than usual. She was dressed in a simple walking costume that became her charmingly. She wore a summer hat to shade her eyes, and her veil was drawn half aside, giving the effect of drapery, beside her nobly-formed features. A light scarf waved around her shoulders.

The morning air was fresh and cheering,

the sun was not shining, and the grey fleeces floated calmly across the sky; the deer in the grass idly trotted here and there, and the sound of falling water came with its own peculiar beauty on the ear. At a distance below lay the grey and time-honoured walls of Mowbray's Court. Though the picture was pleasing, it made little impression on me, and I should not have noticed it but for the words of Lady Jane.

"'Tis a pretty sight; is it not?" said she, as we strolled along a raised walk that led from the park to the farm parts of the demesne, and which commanded a perfect view of the secluded valley in which Mowbray's Court had been built. "I should much like to know whether any of the ladies of my family ever were in such a predicament as I am here, walking with a cavalier who has declared his affection? Perhaps

this avenue of old beeches has heard many declarations of a similar kind made under them. In this walk, they say that one of my courtier ancestors paid his suit to the gayest beauties of the wicked Merry Monarch's Court. 'Tis the old story in every generation, that there is the same grasping after happiness—the same idolatry of the world—the same chasing after butterflies—the same seeking for joy when it is never to be found.”

She uttered these last words with much melancholy of manner, and I noticed the pensive cast of her countenance.

“Nay, Lady Jane, you must not chide the lot in which Providence has placed us. We are here in this world, and there is no use in condemning it. But let me lead you back to the subject of what we were talking upon.”

“It was that very subject that has set me

moralising upon the vanity of all human pursuits, because the answer that I must give to your suit—urged with so much earnestness—has much to do with human vanity. Will you bear to hear the truth; and will you forgive me if I speak very plainly the facts of the case?”

“Again I ask you to speak plainly; and I promise that whatever falls from your lips will be regarded as a secret.”

“My family,” said Lady Jane, speaking with great gravity of manner, “would insist on my making what is called a brilliant match. My father is certainly ambitious, and I know that the great object of his life is to have me married to some vastly wealthy peer, with great resources and the most powerful connections. Nor is that all; there is something more to be said, but I fear to speak it.”

“Do not be afraid of me. Again I ask you to be frank.”

“Well, then, though it is most painful to me to say it, I fear that the importance of my family requires that I should be married to a person of the first consequence, and if I were to make a match by which great importance was not gained for the family—”

“Gain importance for your family! why, who would not be surprised to hear a daughter of the illustrious house of Mowbray talk of gaining importance for her family—a family that has for ages—”

I was interrupted by the sight of Lady Jane's form, which changed while I spoke; and the expression of her face revealed much mental disturbance. Drawing herself up with an air of great dignity, and looking the very picture of pride, she said—

“ It is because I am a daughter of a family that has flourished for ages, and stamped its name in the annals of England, that no act of mine should injure that family. Do you think that I am such a degenerate Mowbray as not to struggle for the preservation of the stock from which I am sprung? Do you think that, if I had the greatness of my family in one hand, and my own personal happiness in the other, that I would for a single instant—aye, a single instant—hesitate as to which of them should be sacrificed? No! though I were on the eve of marriage with the man of my choice; though I were certain of finding happiness with a husband whom I had chosen; if my family—I mean the heads of the Mowbrays—my father, the bishop, and my elder brother—were to remonstrate with me, and tell me that my marriage with

my lover would ruin my far-descended family, while my union with another person, however distasteful, would save the tottering fortunes of those who have for centuries dwelt within those grey walls; I assure you that I would cast my own happiness to the winds, and jump into the gulf of unhappiness, though gloom was to close over my days for the rest of my life, and console myself with what, I fear, must be, and will be, my consolation in the hour of anguish—the proud feeling of martyrdom, and the utter renunciation of myself for the benefit of others.”

While she spoke, her eyes sparkled, and her face flushed with emotion. She looked more grand and imposing than I had ever seen her before; and her superb and somewhat haughty form dilated with the kindling energy of her mind. She looked, with her

proud air and majestic figure, a daughter of old Rome in the days of its ancient grandeur. I was really so much astonished at her air, her manner, and her words, that I remained in silence.

“ Yes, Mr. Wynville,” she continued; “ you seem surprised I can give you no greater proof of my regard for you than the frankness with which I have divulged the inner sentiments of my heart. Now that I have gone so far, prepare to hear more from me.”

I was spell-struck by her words, and I listened to her with rapt interest; and all the scene around me was forgotten while I eagerly listened to her voice, thrilling me with words spoken in earnestness and intensity of feeling. She continued:—

“ You have made me a proposal of marriage, and in doing so you are only one o.

several, whom I have rejected with the utmost indifference. Some have addressed themselves to my father, who has always spoken to me with perfect frankness on the point, and never concealed his worldly and family views on the importance of my making a great match. I have already rejected a Scotch duke, a couple of Irish earls, and sundry English peers and commoners, and all with the approval of Lord Mowbray, who has always told me not to be in a hurry to marry, and who has at the same time intimated to me that he had a match in his mind for me, which would give myself power and consequence, and which would be of vast advantage to my family. Now let me once for all undeceive you about my character. The words which fall from me make you think me a selfish and calculating worldly person; but I say it

with a feeling of proper pride, that I am not in the least a selfish person. I will reveal to you a secret which I know is safe in your breast; and I tell it to you for the purpose of exculpating myself in your eyes, for I should wish to preserve a high place in your regard; and I tell you, that when I arrived at the years of womanhood, that a communication was made to me by my father, which showed too plainly that the fortunes of our family are wrecked—aye, wrecked! Yes, Mr. Wynville, the fortunes of the Mowbrays are in utter jeopardy. Our estate is fearfully encumbered. The follies of one generation, and the ambition of several, have covered us with a load of debt, and we struggle beneath its burden. This house—this park—this ancient timber—all this graceful scenery before us, now associated for centuries with the Mowbrays, are in peril of being pounced upon.

She stopped in the greatest agitation, and I felt deeply as I perceived the pain that she was suffering; just then there appeared some ladies walking on the terrace, on which we were standing.

“’Tis only the Beauchamps,” said Lady Jane; “they are come to pay a morning visit. I see their carriage slowly going down the road, and they are probably walking through the park—and stay! we cannot avoid them. They are walking towards us. We must resume this conversation at another time.”

Mrs. Beauchamp and her two gawky girls were by our side in a minute. Lady Jane resumed her ordinary manner, and summoning up her nerve, no trace of her recent agitation was visible in her countenance. After salutations were exchanged between us, Mrs. Beauchamp began—

“The morning was so lovely, Lady Jane,

that I was tempted to send the carriage round by the road, and to walk with my girls through your beautiful park, and I do love to gaze on the old castle and trees—thus bright. Ah! what a proud thing it is to possess such an ancient place, that has been in one's family so many ages, and how delightful to think that it will descend to future times in the possession of one's own family! Well, Lady Jane, you may well feel proud of your family."

Lady Jane looked towards me as Mrs. Beauchampspoke, and our eyes exchanged glances. I could well feel the pain that such words must have shot through the heart of Lady Jane. We walked on towards the castle, and entered on common-place topics of conversation, and a crowd of country visitors dropped in to pay their respects.

CHAPTER XX.

A MORNING RIDE—CHOOSING DRESSES.

ON the afternoon of the day when I had the foregoing conversation, I rode out by myself up the hilly land, in the neighbourhood of Mowbray's Court. Lord Mowbray could not join in my ride, being delayed on magisterial business, and I was not sorry at being left alone. My feelings

were not a little strange after the revelations of Lady Jane, in the morning. I meditated on all that she had said, and I felt equal disappointment and surprise at what she had stated. Yet the frankness with which she had treated me, and the peculiar tone of confidence assumed by her in speaking to me, suggested plainly that I had a strong hold on her affections, and that she was by no means indifferent to my love. My mind dwelt on the first more than on the last, and I rose the higher in my own esteem as I thought that I had succeeded in strongly interesting in my favour a woman so beautiful and so original in her character as Lady Jane. I resolved, however, to be certain on the point, and determined to endeavour to bring her to a still more unreserved confession of her sentiments with regard to me.

I observed, with increased interest, all the details of the management of the household at Mowbray's Court, and I could perceive that a certain spirit of care and methodical economy reigned through the household, and that Lord Mowbray was not inclined to be extravagant in any degree. I noticed with some pain the careworn appearance of the artful and intriguing lord himself, and I now knew that private cares and family anxieties had furrowed that countenance, and not the deep schemes of a political intriguer.

Company at the castle, and other interruptions, prevented me for a couple of days from resuming the conversation of such interest with Lady Jane. But one morning at breakfast, while we were talking of architecture, an allusion having been made to the Abbey of Donbridge, which I had never seen, Lord Mowbray said—

“Why it is within the distance of a morning ride from us. Lady Jane, why do you not show some of the lions of the county to Mr. Wynville? It would be a pleasant ride for you to-day, and you can canter over there and be home to dinner in time.”

“I shall be very happy to show Mr. Wynville the way to it,” said Lady Jane.

“I should so much like to see the abbey,” said I, with great interest. As I spoke, our eyes met, and I suppose that my eagerness betrayed my real desire of resuming our interrupted conversation, as Lady Jane slightly blushed. Lord Mowbray went to order our steeds to be prepared, and in an hour we were ready to start.

Just as we were going out Lord Mowbray called after us—

“Recollect the Falcon Inn, on no account go to the George.”

“How like my father!” said Lady Jane,

as we cantered away from Mowbray's Court; "he is always for managing electors and complimenting them. He thinks life is a general election, and that from morning to night people must be canvassing!" and she sighed while she spoke.

We rode through a hilly country, in which the scenery was of a very varied character. Sometimes the road went over a barren moorland, and sometimes it wound along a pleasant valley. Here a pleasant park, with one of the stately homes of England peeping through the trees, caught the eye, and there a hamlet, with a water-mill, the mill stream, shaded by alders, looking as if placed especially for a landscape painter. The air was fresh and bracing, and we were in high spirits from our morning ride, and our very steeds seemed to enjoy it as much as their riders.

"After all 'tis a pleasant world, Lady

Jane," cried I; "who can look at hill and sky, and breathe the fresh air, and see such nature as we behold, and not feel that it is a world of loveliness and beauty?"

We were at the time slowly ambling along a valley, in which a stream murmured close beside a thicket which edged a bit of common. Lady Jane answered—

"The face of nature is indeed most lovely.

" ' I have loved the rural walk

Of grassy sward, close cropped by nibbling sheep,
And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs ; have loved the rural walk
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink.' "

"Cowper's love for the country was that of a patriot and poet," said I, quoting the lines—

" ' England, with all thy faults I love thee still.

My country ! and while yet a nook is left

Where English minds and manners may be found,

Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime
Be fickle, and thy year most part deformed
With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,
And fields without a flower, for warmer France,
With all her vines, nor for Ausonia's groves
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.'

Doubtless the poet echoes your feelings there, Lady Jane?"

"So much so," she replied, "that I am disposed to take up the lines where you have dropped them, for I" (and here she looked at me most archly with her exquisite face), "can say with as much truth as poor gifted, unhappy, and glorious Cowper—

"To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime
Of patriot eloquence, to flash down fire
Upon thy foes, was never meant *my* task.'"

She laughed and continued, while looking humorously towards me—

"But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart
As any thunderer there.'"

“Ah, Lady Jane, you are always quizzing me about the House of Commons.”

“Nay, I only called you a thunderer, and surely any promising debater ought to be complimented by a word so often applied to orators. But lo! the abbey is in view, and see the Falcon is in sight, where we are to bait our steeds, and to gratify my father’s love of canvassing, we must have luncheon there in grand style.”

We rode slowly up the little town of Donbridge, and the moment that Lady Jane was recognised numbers of faces brightened up; for her appearance always excited much interest, as she was so very popular with all ranks. The Bonifaces of both the rival inns rose to great expectation, and were most anxious to know whether she would alight at all, and where. We directed our course to the Falcon, and it was comical to

witness the disappointment of the landlord of the George. In an instant the landlady of the Falcon was at the door of that illustrious hostlery, which had three private parlours, not less than eleven bedrooms, and turned out two postchaises. The Falcon had a very fair reputation for its wines also, as an eminent bagman had declared that the port wine was not quite poisonous, notwithstanding what had been said to the contrary; and a half-pay officer who in a freak of fancy had electrified the Humdrum Club's monthly dinner by once calling for a bottle of champagne, had pronounced it equal to any Devonshire cider that he had ever tasted.

We walked from the inn in the direction of the abbey, which was romantically situated, and which, like all venerable and ruined abbeys, was so picturesque that artists

without number had depicted it from time to time. We talked of old times, but it was not of old times that I was thinking, but of her who was by my side, and with whom I longed to speak on a topic more interesting to me than monks and nuns, and the Reformation and its consequences, and all the obvious *et ceteras* suggested to an English mind by the sight of an old abbey in ruins.

Lady Jane sat down on the window sill of what was once the refectory of the monks. The view was over the border of the quiet river, and the scene was one disposed to set the mind musing. But I soon interrupted any disposition that she might have to that half-poetical meditation in which we can easily indulge amidst such scenery.

“Lady Jane, I have been anxiously looking for an opportunity of resuming the conver-

sation we had in the park the other morning, when we were interrupted. You can easily imagine the interest with which I heard you speak on that occasion, and forgive me for again resuming the topic. I did not entirely comprehend what fell from you, and I do not intend to entreat you to be more explicit with me. I feel indeed only too great happiness in the privilege I thus enjoy of speaking to one who is dear to me as life, and who has given me an interest in existence more ardent and intense than I had ever expected to find in life."

"Mr. Wynville," said she, interrupting me, "you pain me by the warmth of your language; after what I have told you I feel assured that you must feel the impropriety of thus addressing me."

"Forgive me, if have thoughtlessly offended, and rest assured that I should

tremble to give you pain, even for a passing moment. Excuse me for what I say, but I am mistaken very much indeed if I did not gather from you, that though you rejected others with carelessness, that my claims were not the object of indifference. Nay, I thought that I could discern in your words that you felt an interest for me, might I say—”

“This is not fair, Mr. Wynville; this is not fair. How would you have me answer you? Did I not tell you that I did not look on myself as my own mistress; that I was ready to suffer martyrdom for my family, if it were necessary? Did I not tell you that I could not entertain your proposals to me because I did not consider myself as a free agent, as I know that my father is scheming for me, and plotting that I should make an ambitious and brilliant match? How could I answer your proposals otherwise than I have done?”

“But, Lady Jane, supposing that you were free to-morrow to choose your husband, dare I hope that I should have the happiness of hearing from your lips that I was not an object of indifference to you? Nay! do not turn from me. Oh! little do you know how long—how passionately I have loved you! and my greatest gratification in having spoken well in the House of Commons was because I thought that it would make me appear more worthy in your eyes. Yes! it was that desire which made me break through my first resolutions, and disregard the instruction of the leaders of my party. It was for you that I spoke—it was to show myself in some degree not unworthy of your preference that I ventured to snatch at the laurel leaf of eloquence.”

“See how you are again addressing me, in a style that, after my frank statement, is obviously unsuited to my ear.”

“Nay! but let me be equally frank with you, beloved and admirable Lady Jane; I am not one of your numerous admirers, captivated by your figure—your manners—your proud birth and splendid beauty—hear me—hear me to the end! Let me speak without interruption, and I promise you that I will not say aught that can offend. I repeat that I am not one of the mere band of your admirers; like them I see and can admire those beauties and that form with which nature in a lavish mood has endowed you—but it is your own self that rivets my mind and fascinates my heart. It is your knowledge of nature—your character so great and so original—your English womanhood so natural and simple—and it is that view of the heroical that inspires your soaring spirit—aye! that it is, which blended with the loveliness of your form, and the beauty

of that matchless face—thrill me with ecstasy, and inspire me with admiration and with true love for the most incomparable of her sex.”

I spoke with intense passion, my heart was beating with excitement, and the words rushed from my lips without reflection. I threw myself at Lady Jane's feet, and looked at her with anxious eyes. I saw that her face was suffused with a blush—and that feelings of opposite natures struggled for mastery. I saw at once—and oh! the luxury of that moment!—that I was *not* an object of utter indifference to her, and that I had produced considerable effect upon her mind.

“Forgive me!” I cried again, “forgive me for the warmth with which I have addressed you; but feelings long pent-up must rush out and declare themselves.”

“Mr. Wynville”—her voice was tremulous, and she hesitated.

“Lady Jane, hear me further—only a moment. Tell me, I conjure you, whether if you were free to choose—”

“I cannot answer the question that you are going to put to me, and besides, it is quite useless to consider matters that are irrelevant.”

“But excuse me while I ask a plain question. I feel that I have been favoured by you highly in your allowing me to speak to you as I have done, and I am grateful for the confidence with which you have trusted me with the secrets of your family. But I cannot rest at ease until I know whether I have awakened in your breast any feelings of that regard towards me which I eagerly desired might arise within your heart.”

“I know not how to answer you,” said

Lady Jane; “but certainly you did awaken much interest in me, and I felt anxious that you should succeed in the objects of your ambition, and I should always have rejoiced to hear of your happiness and prosperity. But I am sure that you will not ask me further; nay—do not proceed to catechise me further;” and assuming a quiet firmness of manner, she added, “I will not permit it.”

She rose from her seat, and walking a few steps forward, she said, “We have had enough of this; let us return; the day is wearing on, and we must not be late at Mowbray’s Court, as there are some people to dine with us to-day.” And changing at once the subject of our conversation, we returned slowly to the inn.

No sooner were we in sight of the house, than a vast bustle took place in the Falcon.

“ Lady Jane Mowbray was coming to lunch at the Falcon!” The news had spread through the town, and into the little inn had crowded several of the shopkeepers’ wives and daughters, all anxious to see what clothes so great a lady condescended to wear. As we walked up the creaking staircase of the Falcon, we were amused by seeing some of the dames leaning over the topmost balustrades, and at catching a glimpse of half an eye, spying out from behind a door partially open. The landlady was attired in trappings of strange style, with a cap and ribbons that reminded one of Salisbury spire springing out of a Chinese pagoda, so curious and fantastic was her head gear; and her giggling daughters, in muslin frocks and streaming sashes, fluttered about through the house, in hopes of attracting a chance look or

word from the earl's daughter, so famous for her beauty.

Lady Jane had ordered luncheon to be served, and we beheld a table loaded with food enough for a corporation. There were two dishes of hot and three dishes of cold meat. There were two or three cold pies, and sundry dishes of confectionary, marmalades, and sweetmeats. It was a luncheon for Gargantua and Lady Jane laughed heartily on witnessing the preparations made for her refreshment. Knowing that her father had some object in canvassing the landlord of the Falcon, she had to act affability, and she got through her part with graceful ease, without overdoing it, or sickening by mock condescension, in the style of some great ladies, who know no distinction between popularizing and vulgarizing themselves. As for me, I was in

the highest spirits, and doubt whether I ever enjoyed a luncheon or meal of any kind more. The conversation with Lady Jane at the abbey had filled my mind with anticipations, that I might possibly one day have a chance of calling Lady Jane my own; and I was gratified in the highest degree, by knowing that she had been more complaisant to me than to any other of her admirers. I rose higher in my own esteem, and I felt also that Lady Jane had left a great deal unsaid, and that it was very probable that I stood much higher in her affections than she thought proper to admit. I made the inference from a variety of petty circumstances—a certain manner and turn of addressing me, and a confidential mode of consulting with me on some points.

We made merry at the luncheon table about the sensation which the arrival of

Lady Jane caused in Donbridge. I said to her that it was quite equal to the effect of a royal duke going to breakfast at the house of a Manchester cotton spinner, and in reply, she declared that she should patronise some of the shops.

Accordingly, after luncheon, we again sallied into the town; and Lady Jane caused a fresh sensation by visiting the establishment of the Mesdames Flush and Bibby; and turning good-naturedly over a counter full of dresses, ordered an entire piece, and a box full of ribbons and lace, to be forwarded to Mowbray's Court. While standing at the counter of the milliner's shop, I thought how happy I should feel if Lady Jane were then choosing her wedding clothes, and if she and I were to be married in a week. The thought, as it floated through my mind, caused a pleasing and delightful

illusion; and I could not help pricing a lavender watered dress, which was the very wonder of all the county belles who visited the establishment of Mesdames Flush and Bibby.

“What! going to buy a dress?” said Lady Jane. “What can you be about?”

“I want to send one to my cousin in Wiltshire, Fanny Tollemache, and I think that would suit her perfectly.”

“What style is she?” said Lady Jane. “You must not choose her a wrong colour. What sort of eyes, and what kind of complexion has she?”

I was only thinking of Lady Jane all the time, and secretly vowing, that if ever fortune granted that I should have the happiness of calling her my wife, that she should be married in the very dress that I should purchase then.

“She has,” said I, “black eyes and a profusion of black hair, and a high colour.”

“And so you would choose for her a lavender dress. Well, what pretty taste you gentlemen have! You never can understand the dress of ladies.”

“Who the deuce could? It would be easier in a month’s reading to understand the currency question.”

“Well, you should buy your black-eyed cousin a pale amber satin, or as she has a high colour, why not buy a blue satin for her?”

“Oh! yur la’ship, we have got such beautiful blue satins, if yur la’ship would only condescend to be pleased to look at this, yur la’ship, at this counter, yur la’ship—if yur la’ship would only walk this way, if you please, ma—am, that is, I beg a thousand pardons—yur la’ship.”

The little shopkeeper was rejoiced at the idea of selling another dress, and Lady Jane assumed a lady's privilege in changing her mind three or four times, as to whether my cousin Fanny would look best in a pale amber, or blue satin. First she chose one, and then Miss Bibby said—

“Yes! yur la’ship—I think yur la’ship has decided quite right.”

Then, in a minute after, Lady Jane said she thought that, on second thoughts, the blue satin would look best; on which Miss Bibby chimed in—

“Well, indeed, yur la’ship, I really think that yur la’ship is quite right, and that the blue is a more beautiful satin, yur la’ship.”

I ended the doubts, however, by saying that I would have a dress of each, and that I would send both to my cousin. At the same time I resolved that in memory of that

happy day, when I had enjoyed so interesting a conversation with her whom I so admired, that I would keep both the dresses, and that if ever the day might come when Lady Jane would be my bride, that I should insist on her wearing one of the dresses, over the buying of which we had so much raillery and quizzing.

The dresses were ordered to be sent on to Mowbray's Court, and soon we proceeded home.

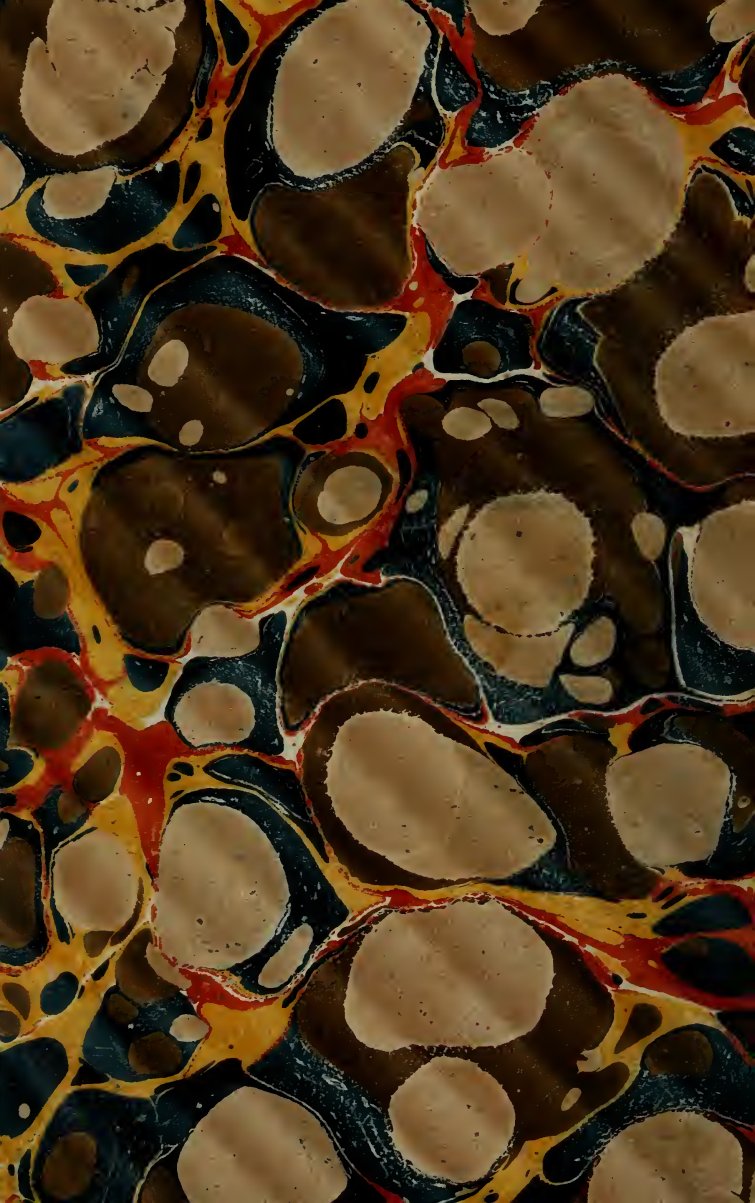
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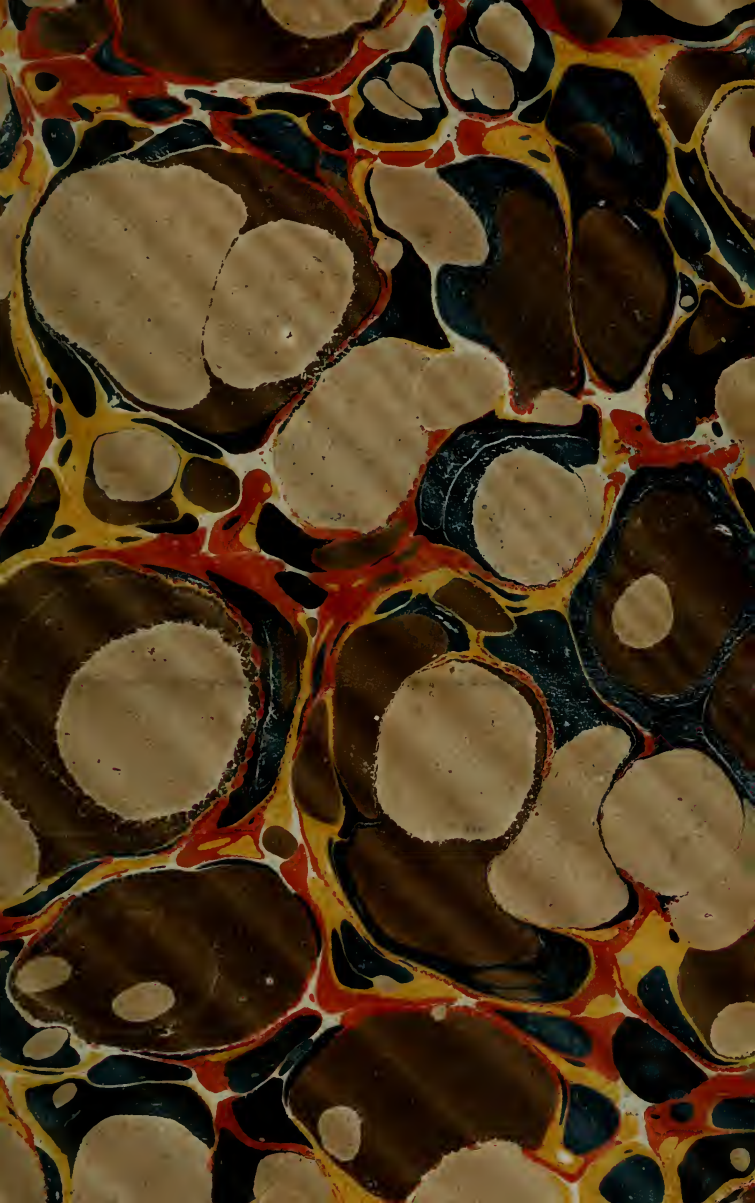
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